



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE MALL SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Mall School

Full Name of School	The Mall School		
DfE Number	318/6003		
Registered Charity Number	295003		
Address	The Mall School 185 Hampton Road Twickenham Middlesex TW2 5NQ		
Telephone Number	020 8614 1082		
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Email Address	admin@themallschool.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr David Price		
Chair of Governors	Mr Rupert Walker		
Age Range	4 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	307		
Gender of Pupils	Boys		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 229
	3-5 (EYFS):	24	11-13: 54
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Juliet Tovey		
EYFS Gender	Boys		
Inspection dates	21 May 2013 to 24 May 2013		

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 2010.

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. 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', 'satisfactory' 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 members of staff and with 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 Christopher Sanderson

Mr Gareth Davies

Mr Geoffrey Hammond

Mr Robert Middleton

Mrs Kirsten Jackson

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

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Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Mall School is a day preparatory school in Twickenham. It was founded in 1872 and occupies two sites on Hampton Road, a short distance apart. It educates boys aged from 4 to 13. The Mall Infants site houses the Reception and Year 1 classes, and the main site accommodates Years 2 and 3, and the Seniors (Years 4 to 8). The school is a registered charity, administered by a board of governors. It uses sports pitches at two off-site locations for games.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has opened a new creative and performing arts centre. It has also appointed several new members of its senior management team.
- 1.3 The school aims to enable boys to do their best in everything they undertake and to develop the talents and abilities of each individual, balancing the demands of the curriculum with outlets for physical and creative energy. It seeks to provide a safe environment within a happy, relaxed, caring and sometimes informal community, and to instil a spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding in the boys, and an awareness of the needs of others.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection there were 307 pupils on roll. This includes 64 accommodated on the Mall Infants site, of whom 24 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). All children in the EYFS attend on a full-time basis. At the main site, there are 67 pupils in Years 2 and 3, and 176 in the Seniors.
- 1.5 Most pupils live in the local area and come from families with professional and business backgrounds. They represent a wide range of nationalities and cultures. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and are judged by the school not to require additional support. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. A few pupils have below average ability and around a fifth have well above average ability. The school does not select by ability on entry at the age of four. Pupils entering after this age undertake an assessment. Of the 33 pupils the school has identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), it provides specialist learning support to 10. No pupils have 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 The achievements and learning of the pupils are excellent. Pupils reach high standards in accordance with the school's aims. They make excellent progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills across the broad range of subjects and activities. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning: they settle swiftly, listen raptly and work with enthusiasm. The excellent, stimulating curriculum benefits from enthusiastic specialist teaching from Year 4, enabling pupils of all abilities to make excellent progress. It is enriched by regular visits and an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities. The EYFS provides a stimulating and nurturing environment. Teaching is good; it promotes excellent progress, employing a variety of motivational methods and showing a clear understanding of individual needs. Marking and reporting are inconsistent in providing useful guidance and points for improvement. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, but lack of a strategic vision results in inconsistent application of ICT skills in subjects. Teachers are highly qualified and enjoy a strong rapport with the pupils.
- 2.2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They grow in self-confidence, self-knowledge and responsibility. They are keen to discuss moral and ethical issues and are tolerant of the views of others. They have a broad understanding of and involvement in their own and other cultures. Excellent pastoral care supports their development. The school provides strong support and guidance for the pupils in a safe, happy, caring and relaxed environment. Staff encourage them to be healthy and ensure that they enjoy their life at school. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Measures to ensure welfare, health and safety are good. Thorough safeguarding procedures are carefully monitored. Risk assessments and other necessary measures are undertaken to minimise risk, although a programme for review of a recent fire risk assessment has not yet been formalised. Provision for first aid and medication is thorough.
- 2.3 Governance is good. Governors have a knowledgeable oversight of the school and a good understanding of their roles. Committees oversee specific areas of school operations. Governors monitor carefully the work of the school and gain a good insight into school life. They discharge their statutory responsibilities successfully and ensure a well-informed approach to health and safety. Leadership and management are good, and fulfil the school's aims to balance curriculum demands with outlets for physical and creative energy in a happy and relaxed environment. Policies and teaching are reviewed and monitored carefully in general. Rigorous systems in the EYFS ensure continuous improvement and a clear vision for future development. Recruitment procedures are efficient; checks on staff and visitors are undertaken correctly. Planning is wide ranging but priorities are not always identified systematically. Links with parents are excellent; the school provides a wealth of information and communicates well with parents. Reports provide a generally detailed summary of the pupils' progress and achievement.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Improve the quality of marking and reporting through the consistent inclusion of guidance on the next steps in the pupils' learning.
2. Develop a strategy for the consistent use of ICT as a tool for learning in all subject areas.
3. Formally record the programme for review of actions in relation to fire risk assessment to ensure systematic monitoring of progress.

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 pupils' success in academic work and the wider curriculum strongly fulfils the school's aim to provide all its pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to do their best in everything they undertake. Throughout the school, and across a broad and academic curriculum, the pupils show high levels of knowledge and understanding, and well-developed skills. They articulate their ideas thoughtfully and often with a coherence above that expected for their age, enabled by participation in a critical thinking, reasoning and argument project in which some recently participated. They listen attentively and demonstrate understanding and excitement in their answers. They read with expression and discrimination, and write fluently and accurately for a variety of purposes and audiences. They show a particularly keen grasp of mathematical concepts and apply this throughout the curriculum as well as in national mathematics challenges, where they achieve highly. Their technological skills develop strongly, particularly through their work in design technology (DT). Recent development of the school's ICT facilities has resulted in the pupils' good computing skills in ICT classes. The EYFS staff challenge and support the children to at least meet and in many cases exceed the Early Learning Goals. The pupils' artwork, effectively displayed throughout the school, is testament not only to their capacity for creativity but also to their awareness of colour, form and shape. Through a wide-ranging activities programme pupils achieve well in their extra-curricular pursuits, notably in chess, music and swimming. Pupils have won a national title in swimming, many have gained high grades in instrumental music examinations and some have been invited to perform in prominent local dramatic productions. In recent years, pupils have won academic scholarships and also awards for sports, music and drama.
- 3.3 The achievement and progress of all children in the EYFS setting are excellent. Children read well for pleasure and information, researching, for example, to discover that centipedes eat flies. Their writing is excellent and they incorporate it into their play, such as writing postcards and delivering them by trolley. They use numbers confidently, and enjoyed counting back and in twos in their work on caterpillars.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment cannot be compared with average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities, most having an ability that is above average. In response to an academic and challenging curriculum in all age groups, pupils gain entry at the age of thirteen to selective senior schools. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates a high rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, as seen in the scrutiny of books, in discussion with inspectors and work in lessons. The strong challenge provided for the most able ensures high levels of progress. Pupils with SEND make excellent progress in relation to their needs due to the well-managed and targeted support they receive. The targets set for them are frequently met, to the extent that many pupils can continue without additional support after a relatively short period.
- 3.5 The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. In the EYFS, children use their imaginations creatively. They are engaged, and motivated to persist with their work, thriving on the praise and encouragement they need to succeed. They develop

independence, particularly in the outdoor areas, exploring their surroundings. They work well together, especially when tidying up. Throughout the school, pupils are lively and interested learners, full of enthusiasm and ideas, and unfettered in their desire to share, develop and communicate their thoughts. They settle quickly in class and make good use of time. They use their initiative and eagerly undertake the tasks they are given. Pupils enjoy their learning and work with zeal both independently and in collaboration with others.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The broad and balanced curriculum effectively supports the aim of the school to balance curricular demands with outlets for creative and physical energy. The curriculum covers effectively the required areas of learning. It is carefully planned, stimulating, and tailored to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and ages. It is enriched by the inclusion of French taught by native speakers from Year 2, separate sciences taught by specialists from Year 4, Latin, art and DT, and a wide range of team and individual sports.
- 3.8 An indoor pool on site enables an ambitious swimming programme to be followed and swimming is taught weekly from Reception. The high quality swimming provision has enabled success in national and regional championships on a regular basis. The high quality purpose-built theatre facilitates regular drama productions, concerts and assemblies. Other specialist facilities, such as for science, DT and art, enrich the curriculum. However, the EYFS outdoor areas are not used to their full extent, with the result that children do not experience the benefits of using them in all areas of the curriculum.
- 3.9 The high quality curricular provision facilitates excellent skills, knowledge and understanding. Throughout the school, the curriculum encourages the development of creative ability and aesthetic appreciation. For example, in a music lesson for older pupils, all were able to contribute at a level suited to their musical ability because they were given lines within the ensemble of appropriate challenge. Almost three-quarters of pupils play a musical instrument, and benefit from individual music practice rooms. Regular drama productions further enhance the outstanding performing arts provision.
- 3.10 Provision for the teaching of ICT is good, and shows progress since the previous inspection. A lack of strategic vision for ICT across the curriculum, however, results in insufficient planning for the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of other subjects.
- 3.11 All pupils, and in particular the more able, in Years 4 to 8 benefit from the curriculum being delivered by subject specialists. The curriculum for the most able pupils is managed carefully to ensure a balance with academic study. An academic scholarship set is established in Year 7 and a challenging curriculum is followed by these pupils in Year 8, designed to prepare them for scholarship examinations to selective senior schools. Scholars are carefully nurtured and the curriculum appropriately adjusted to ensure an enjoyable, achievable and rigorous scholarship programme. Setting in mathematics from Year 5 and grouping of classes according to ability from Year 7 ensure that the curriculum is tailored to the needs of individual pupils. The EYFS is excellent in meeting the needs of all the children; they are taught in small groups so that the staff know each child well and plan for their

individual learning needs. Excellent support for pupils with SEND ensures that the curriculum is accessible to them. Considered planning of the curriculum confirms the school's judgement that those pupils with EAL need no further individual support.

- 3.12 The curriculum ensures enthusiastic engagement by pupils and provides enjoyable challenge, with reassurance that support is always available. It is enriched by regular visits, including geography field trips, French language trips, farm visits in Reception and residential outdoor education in Year 8. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, through the curriculum and in assemblies, provides well for the pupils' personal development.
- 3.13 The provision includes an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities and visits, which are strengths of the school. The choice has been broadened since the previous inspection to include a more diverse range of activities to suit different interests, including an animation club, a chess club and a science club. Strong provision is made for music, with a wide range of choirs, bands and ensembles.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 Building on the foundation of excellent pastoral care and the pupils' high levels of personal development, teaching is effective in promoting pupils' excellent progress and meets the aims of the school to encourage them to do their best in everything that they undertake. The quality of teaching in a very large majority of lessons observed was good or excellent. Staff in the EYFS show very high expectations of the children and are enthusiastic in helping each child to do his best. They work together positively in observing and assessing the children. These assessments are used well in planning to provide a stimulating and creative learning environment for the children.
- 3.16 Effective planning reflects a secure understanding of the pupils' needs and builds well on their previous learning. Marking is regular and punctual. The best examples are constructive and helpful. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and it does not generally include clear guidance on the next steps for improvement.
- 3.17 Dialogue with the pupils is a particularly effective feature of teaching and enables a strong understanding of their needs, and the on-going adjustment of planning. Small class sizes are an advantage in the best-planned lessons, where the potential to question, support and challenge at an individual level is fully exploited. Detailed assessments to identify any specific special educational needs enable the pupils' learning profiles to be established and early interventions to be planned. Regular standardised assessment provides teachers with an insight into the pupils' academic potential and development. Peer assessment is used effectively, such as the constructive feedback given by older pupils to each other following audio-visual presentations. The careful setting of targets for improvement in Year 8 is closely linked to examination expectations. The recommendation of the previous inspection that the school should extend target setting to other year groups has not yet been fully developed. Pupils agree general targets with their parents and teachers, and gain merits for achieving them over the course of a term, but more specific targets are not set consistently.
- 3.18 A recommendation from the previous inspection was that pupils use the techniques they learn in ICT lessons in all appropriate areas of the curriculum. The school has

subsequently invested in ICT resources, but the wider use of ICT in other subjects occurs occasionally and is not consistent.

- 3.19 Teaching employs a variety of methods that motivate the pupils to sustain an excellent rate of progress. Teaching shows an understanding of which approaches are particularly well suited to the pupils' needs, responding to their styles of learning and regularly involving practical and investigative work. Teaching benefits from a brisk pace and a rotation of tasks to maintain motivation and interest. Teachers are highly qualified and passionate about their subjects; expert knowledge encourages pupils to engage fully in their learning. Knowledge and skills are frequently placed in the context of situations in the real world, giving additional meaning to the pupils' learning. Teaching makes excellent use of specialist facilities, such as the science laboratories, which provide an exciting and enriching environment that promotes learning.
- 3.20 Teaching benefits from positive relationships in which pupils are encouraged to accept challenge in order to achieve their potential. Pupils' trust of and their rapport with teachers are outstanding, and the relaxed and supportive environment ensures that pupils can learn with confidence. Independent and investigative work benefits the pupils in several subjects, as, for example, in practical revision sessions in science. Teaching ensures that pupils take great pride in their work and are optimistic about realising their potential. The teaching of pupils with SEND is strong; careful adjustments are made to classroom provision, and additional support is provided where appropriate, to enable them to maintain notable progress. Children in the EYFS with SEND are quickly recognised and their needs addressed well. The most successful teaching ensures that the most able pupils progress at a brisk pace, with readily available suitable extension work.

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 Pupils exhibit a high level of emotional maturity when undertaking leadership roles, such as running a pupil council for younger boys and monitoring their behaviour in the dining room. Others serve their community as head boy, prefects and heads of houses, and in school teams for cricket, swimming, chess, rugby and football. They are keen that high standards of fairness are maintained. Pupils are confident and have an excellent insight into their own skills and talents, particularly developed through their participation in music, sport and drama. In the EYFS, children are confident when sharing their ideas with adults and with each other, and that they will be treated with respect.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate excellent spiritual awareness. They show positive self-confidence and self-awareness, which enable them to develop high self-esteem. They demonstrated their appreciation of non-material aspects of life in an assembly on happiness, which showed how a child's life was changed by a cleft-palate operation, funded by a charity. Pupils showed wonder at the inclusion of a snake in a science lesson.
- 4.4 Pupils have excellent moral understanding and enjoy discussing ethical issues, as, for example, in an essay on revolution. Older pupils put their moral views into practice when they participated in a citizenship scheme run by the police. They were given challenging real life situations to act out and discussed their reactions. Pupils raise money for a wide range of charities, including a partner school in Malawi, and were moved by seeing a photograph of their work on a wall in this school. When learning about people dwelling in a shantytown in Haiti, pupils showed appreciation of how other communities live and how fortunate they are.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic, well behaved and keen to co-operate with one another. A small number of parents expressed in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire concerns about the quality of behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate these views. The pupils work well together in extra-curricular activities and in teams. They are extremely tolerant of one another and appreciate individuality. They demonstrate a strong sense of social responsibility, for instance in the Year 8 leadership programme and in Year 7 when training to be prefects. The 'buddy' system promotes friendship and support between year groups and is appreciated by the pupils. Visits to an elderly care home are also arranged, enriching the pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils gain a good understanding of different political and economic systems in history, for example learning about Russia, China and Germany. The school takes care to ensure a balance when introducing topics about which there are differing political opinions.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural experience and awareness are excellent; their widespread involvement in music, art and drama enriches their lives and development. They are inspired by the displays of art around the school and gain self-esteem when they see their own on show. Their cultural experiences ensure a clear understanding of and respect for both their own cultural traditions and those of others, strongly promoting a sense of harmony. The wide variety of interesting and challenging trips, both in the UK and abroad, enhances the pupils' cultural understanding, especially through

the encouragement to reflect and document their experiences. In religious studies classes, history and PSHE they gain a good understanding of other faiths and cultures. Curricular links with a school in Malawi enable pupils to exchange work, thus gaining an insight into the lives of children in an African village.

- 4.7 The transition of EYFS children from other settings and into Year 1 is excellent. Children entering Reception have an induction afternoon and staff visit their nurseries, and when moving into Year 1 they enjoy an easy transition within a known environment. Care is taken to ensure a smooth transfer from the Mall Infants site to the main site and subsequently through the various stages of the school. By the time they leave the school, pupils demonstrate high levels of personal development.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Through class teachers and tutors, as well as good forums for sharing information amongst staff, the school provides excellent support and guidance for pupils, in accordance with its aims to provide a safe environment within a happy, relaxed, caring and sometimes informal community. This promotes pupils' excellent personal development.
- 4.10 Care practices in the EYFS are excellent, ensuring high quality personal and emotional development; children feel safe and have the confidence to work and play adventurously. Staff in the EYFS serve as excellent role models, enabling all children, especially those needing additional support, to form strong bonds with them and with each other. Children are very happy in the setting and approach all activities with enthusiasm. In all age groups, staff know the pupils well and relationships are extremely positive, both between pupils and staff and amongst pupils themselves. Consequently, a busy atmosphere of tolerance and respect pervades the school.
- 4.11 Staff understand the importance of and take considerable care to promote a healthy lifestyle through encouraging exercise and monitoring pupils' eating. Bright, informative posters in the dining room reinforce the message, supplemented through the curriculum, for example as the theme for a French oral lesson for older pupils. Children in the EYFS speak articulately about the need for a healthy diet and exercise, and are independent in managing their own hygiene and personal needs.
- 4.12 The system of rewards and sanctions is highly effective in nurturing good behaviour and discouraging misbehaviour. An emphasis is placed firmly on the positive and pupils enjoy accumulating credits, which not only brings personal praise, but also success to the house and to their class. Any more serious sanctions are sensitively managed. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents expressed concerns regarding bullying. Inspection findings did not support these views. Staff and pupils are strongly aware of how to guard against bullying and the school implements appropriate measures to do so. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, older pupils noted that they find some inconsistency in the awarding of rewards and sanctions. In their observations and in discussion with the pupils, however, inspectors found no evidence to support this. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 A small minority of pupils expressed concern in pre-inspection questionnaire responses that they have limited opportunity to voice their opinions. Inspectors found that pupils are provided with many opportunities to express their views

through the pupil council, which both promotes practical changes, such as the purchase of play equipment and measures to promote a calm environment in the library for chess, and influences the school ethos, in the creation of a school code. A confidential messages box is also provided to enable pupils' views to be expressed discreetly.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 Throughout the school, safeguarding has the highest priority. Arrangements are thorough and are carefully monitored. In all sections of the school, the designated child protection officers and staff have undertaken appropriate training. Safeguarding is a key topic in the induction of new staff. In response to the findings of the previous inspection, the school follows suitable procedures in the recruitment of staff and recording of the checks undertaken on appointment.
- 4.16 At both sites, the school undertakes the necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Evacuation drills are practised on a regular basis, and equipment and alarm systems are suitably tested and maintained. A recent fire risk assessment has been completed and progress reviewed, though the programme for review is not yet formalised.
- 4.17 The school takes care over the health and safety of its pupils at both sites, in transit between them and on off-site visits. Risk assessments are prepared carefully, and suitable measures ensure the safe use and storage of chemicals in the science department and power tools in the DT room. Staff in the EYFS ensure a welcoming and safe environment, and undertake regular risk assessments of all areas and in preparation for educational visits. The school has effective procedures for pupils who are unwell, including first aid and the storage and administration of medication. A large number of staff hold first-aid qualifications. Good health and safety provision is made for any pupils with SEND; a lift and ramps have been installed in the school's newest building.
- 4.18 Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored in accordance with requirements.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governors bring to the school experience from a broad range of professional backgrounds, including education, accountancy, law and medicine, enabling them to achieve a knowledgeable oversight of the school and ensure that it meets its aims. This promotes the excellent academic achievement and personal development of the pupils. Governors have undertaken training, including in safer recruitment and safeguarding. An induction programme for new governors enables them to gain a good understanding of their roles. Governors' committees for child protection, risk, finance, property, personnel and education take an interest in specific areas of school life and report to the full governing body, enabling it to fulfil its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning, staffing, resources and accommodation. Governors recognise the importance of the EYFS, but their limited understanding of its framework and requirements hinders the effectiveness of their involvement.
- 5.3 Through reports from senior management, formal and informal visits to school, attendance at school events, analysis of examination results and of sporting and extra-curricular achievement, and the systematic review of policies and procedures, governors monitor carefully the work of the school. They gain a good insight into school life, ensuring well-focused support and challenge for all staff and prudent planning for growth, improvement and development of the premises.
- 5.4 The governing body is successful in discharging its responsibilities for statutory requirements. Governors undertake an annual review of safeguarding measures and ensure a well-informed approach to health and safety.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 Leadership is strong and the school's progress reflects the work and focus of senior leadership and of management at all levels. The leadership, well supported by the senior management team, provides astute clarity of direction, which has seen excellent progress since the previous inspection in performance management and academic monitoring. However, the three recommendations from the previous inspection have yet to be fully addressed.
- 5.7 Excellent leadership in the EYFS provides a very clear vision of the future direction of the setting. Systems for planning, assessment, self-evaluation and review are fully embedded and formalised, ensuring that targets for improvement are carefully identified and prioritised. The success of the school's leadership in evaluating the work of the setting ensures excellent capacity for continuous improvement, although planning for greater use of the outdoor area is limited.
- 5.8 The school has made improvements since the previous inspection in its procedures for recruitment checks on new staff before their appointment, now meeting

requirements. All staff undertake training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, contributing strongly to pupils feeling safe and supported at school.

- 5.9 The leadership and management of the school ensure that its overall aims are met effectively. In addition to effectively preparing pupils for entry to future schools, the school is successful in balancing the demands of the curriculum with outlets for physical and creative energy and the pupils' personal development. The recent improvement of the school's facilities through the addition of a creative and performing arts centre and the current construction of a new sports hall underline the commitment to breadth of experience, as does the carefully conceived leadership programme for pupils in Years 7 and 8. The senior management team contributes strongly to the creation of a purposeful, happy, caring and relaxed environment, in which pupils demonstrate the spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding of one another. In their discussions with inspectors and in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils commented positively about the school and the richness of their experiences, views supported by inspection findings.
- 5.10 The school's leadership and management staff work extremely well together and provide consistently good support to colleagues, often through informal discussions. Staff are well motivated, and value the approachability of the senior management team and the support it provides. Approaches to teaching and learning are a key focus for regular discussion at staff and departmental meetings. A formal system for the monitoring and review of the work of the school assesses its effectiveness and contributes to the identification of training needs and areas for development. Self-evaluation across the school shows a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and sets clear direction for future developments. Comprehensive development plans, for the school and at departmental level, reflect monitoring and self-evaluation processes but do not always clearly identify priorities, such as addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection and systematically monitoring the school's progress against the recent fire risk assessment.
- 5.11 The school successfully recruits highly qualified staff with excellent subject knowledge and relevant experience for their roles. They benefit from good, well-focused professional development, which is often identified through their performance management and linked to the school development plan. Teaching and classroom support staff are deployed effectively to provide strong support to the pupils' welfare and educational development. Catering, administrative and maintenance staff play a significant role in the success of the school and are clearly committed to school life. The contribution of all staff to the pupils' welfare and learning is a strength of the school. Excellent staff-to-pupil ratios ensure that pupils benefit from good personal support, often in small teaching groups.
- 5.12 Links with parents are excellent. Informative relationships with parents develop well through strong lines of communication. In the EYFS, useful partnerships with the local authority and other schools enable staff in the setting to share and learn from good practice. Parents are given ample information, both before and after their children join the setting, so that they can support learning at home with ideas for games and activities. An induction afternoon enables both parents and children to feel immediately at home in the nurturing atmosphere of the school. The 'home reading book' provides an excellent and continuing link with parents, which enables them to be kept informed about their children's achievements and progress and their comments to be included in their children's records.

- 5.13 Throughout the school, a wealth of information, including that which is required, is provided to parents of current and prospective pupils through the prospectus, the website, email and the monthly newsletter. A text messaging system keeps parents up to date and well informed about any changes at short notice to published routines. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were generally positive about the school. In particular, they were very pleased with the information made available about the school and the school's timely answers to their questions. Parents also commented positively about the range of subjects and experiences available to the pupils and their safety at school.
- 5.14 The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents through a supportive parents' association, individual meetings and coffee mornings with senior staff, and in informal conversations at the start and end of the school day. Some parents expressed concerns about guidance regarding the choice of future schools and the preparation of the pupils for their chosen schools. Inspectors found that such advice and preparation are thorough. The process begins with a recently introduced parents' information evening in Year 4 about future schools, followed up by individual parents' meetings with the leadership. A number of parents also expressed concern about the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspectors found limited evidence to support this. Reports are produced at least twice a year in all year groups, and termly in Year 8. They present a broad summary of the work covered, grades for effort and attainment, and a comment on the individual pupil's performance. The best reports also include guidance on the next steps that pupils need to take for further improvement, though this is not a consistent feature.
- 5.15 The school has a clear and appropriate policy and procedure for handling complaints. It deals sensitively with parents' concerns and keeps accurate records. A minority of parents raised concern about the school's response to complaints. Inspectors found that these are well documented and treated with care and consideration; as a result the vast majority of parents' concerns are successfully addressed informally.
- 5.16 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children, and benefit from good correspondence between home and school in the reading records of those in the younger year groups. Parents can be involved in the organisation of trips, and many support school events and fixtures.

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