



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
GEMS HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

GEMS Hampshire School

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|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full Name of School | GEMS Hampshire School |
| DfE Number | 207/6055 |
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| Head | Mr Donal Brennan |
| Proprietor | GEMS UK |
| Age Range | 3 to 13 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 258 |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (169 boys; 89 girls) |
| Numbers by Age | 3-5 (EYFS): 55 5-11: 178 11-13: 25 |
| Head of EYFS Setting | Mrs Bronwyn Kidd |
| EYFS Gender | Mixed |
| Inspection Dates | 03 Mar 2015 to 06 Mar 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 February 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. **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 proprietor and interim chair 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

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Mrs Jan Preece | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Jeanette Adams | Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school) |
| Miss Claire Corkran | Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school) |
| Mr Gareth Davies | Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA and IAPS school) |
| Mrs Kirsten Jackson | Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years |
| Mrs Frances Willacy | Team Inspector Early Years (Former Head, IAPS school) |

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 GEMS Hampshire School is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of three and thirteen. Founded in Surrey in 1928 it moved to Knightsbridge in 1933. It was acquired by GEMS Education in 2004 and is one of several schools the company owns in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. One of the company's executive directors undertakes proprietorial responsibilities for all GEMS schools in the UK and Europe. The school operates on two sites; the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is housed in a Victorian building in Wetherby Place, and Years 1 to 8 on the former site of Chelsea Library in Manresa Road. The headmaster has been in post since January 2014.
- 1.2 The school's main aim is to value, respect and support all learners by providing a high quality education in a stimulating environment. It seeks to inspire a sense of security and belonging which builds confidence and respect through high expectations academically, socially and emotionally, which prepare learners for an ever evolving world. The school's overriding ethos is to have a 'we care for each other' approach to all aspects of its provision.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 258 pupils on roll, of whom 169 were boys and 89 girls. Fifty-five children aged between rising three and five years are in the EYFS at Wetherby Place. Throughout the school there is a wide spread of abilities, and variations between cohorts, but overall the ability profile is slightly above the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of different nationalities and from local and expatriate business or professional backgrounds. Some join or leave at other stages than the customary transition points due to parental relocation. Pupils transfer mainly to London day schools either at the age of eleven or thirteen.
- 1.4 The school has identified 13 pupils as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support at school. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Twelve pupils are at an early stage of learning English (EAL) and receive additional support.
- 1.5 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 |
|-----------|------------------------------|
| Sapphires | Nursery (rising 3 year olds) |
| Emeralds | Nursery |
| Diamonds | Reception |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is extremely successful in fulfilling its aim to value, respect and support all learners by providing a high quality education in a stimulating environment in which the overriding principle is care for one another. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. Due to the provision of excellent support and challenge, pupils with SEND and those who are very able make similarly good progress. Those with EAL sometimes make rapid progress. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced with improving provision for the creative and performing arts, particularly drama. It is supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' success is the result of the excellent quality of teaching, which has improved since the previous inspection and uses assessment effectively to ensure that teachers have a clear picture of individual pupils' learning needs. Pupils enjoy their lessons and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards learning. The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are excellent, though provision to build on indoor learning outside is less well developed.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They understand their personal strengths and weaknesses and how these might be developed, and demonstrate emotional maturity. Their behaviour, sense of responsibility and tolerance for each other's differences within their international school community are excellent. Pupils' personal development is well supported by excellent pastoral care. Relationships are warm and friendly and great priority is given to each pupil's well-being. Whilst in daily practice arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, insufficient attention has been paid to ensuring that all policies are up-to-date and procedures secure. By the end of the inspection the school had acted swiftly to remedy deficiencies in these areas.
- 2.3 Sound governance has until very recently been provided centrally. At the time of inspection governance was in a period of reorganisation and a change in personnel. Plans are in place for separate school governance with company support. Whilst governance has provided valuable expert support to the school's new leadership, it has been insufficiently rigorous in monitoring the school's policies, audits and staff recruitment checks to ensure that they meet regulatory requirements. Senior leaders have made excellent progress in establishing themselves as a team. They have successfully introduced improvements that promote the pupils' success, as well as identifying the school's future direction and priorities for improvement. All the recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The leadership has been less rigorous in reviewing regulatory matters. The school has an excellent relationship with parents who are strongly supportive of the education provided to their children.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to:

- ensure that, should the criminal records check be delayed, a separate barred list check is obtained before the commencement of employment [Part 4, paragraph 18.(3), under Suitability of staff and proprietors] and for the same reasons [Part 3, paragraph 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety] and [Part 8, paragraph 34.(1)(c), under Leadership in and management of schools]

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. To ensure timely compliance with statutory requirements, implement systems at both company and school level for their rigorous monitoring.
2. To improve the pupils development through the range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences, in relation to the creative and performing arts.
3. In the EYFS, develop innovative and imaginative ways to ensure that all seven areas of learning are covered when using outdoor spaces.

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 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to value, respect and support all learners by providing a high-quality education in a stimulating environment. In the EYFS all children make at least good progress and they achieve well in relation to their starting points. Most children reach the expected levels of development by the end of EYFS and many exceed these levels. The few children whose skills are less well developed are identified early so that help and support can be given both to the child and their parents. The children are articulate and confident when talking to adults and to one another, and communicate well especially in imaginative role-play. They enjoy coming to school, and through careful planning of their learning, develop their independence, creativity and investigative skills. Children in Nursery can count to ten in French, know the names of different shapes and can sort into small, medium and large. In Reception they can use simple number bonds. The youngest children in Nursery recognise the names of other children in the class and, by Reception, children can write a simple sentence using a capital letter, finger space and full stop. The confidence and skills gained by children in the setting prepares them well for the next stage of their learning.
- 3.3 As a result of the school's focus on speaking and listening, pupils from Year 1 onwards are articulate and keen to express their opinions. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to one another. They read fluently and expressively for their ages, and demonstrate good comprehension. As they progress through the school they exhibit well-developed skills and creativity when writing for different purposes. They use books, resources and information and communication technology (ICT) competently to engage in independent research. Most pupils present their work neatly and older pupils are able to take notes competently; both skills have improved since the previous inspection. As a result of highly effective teaching, pupils demonstrate excellent reasoning skills as exemplified in the high standard of their debating, and in frequent opportunities for discussions in class. Pupils' strong mathematical skills are applied well to problem solving and in subjects such as science. Their physical skills are well developed. Pupils' skills in the creative and performing arts, particularly in collaborative performance, are less well developed. Individual pupils have been selected to exhibit their art at local and national exhibitions and others have been successful in external instrumental examinations and passed ballet examinations with distinction. Talented individuals have achieved particularly well in taekwondo and judo.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but on the evidence available, it is judged to be above average in relation to national age-related expectations. Many pupils are successful in gaining places at senior schools through competitive tests; each year several gain awards. Inspection evidence, which includes consideration of the levels at which pupils are working relative to national targets, confirms this judgement. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to those of similar ability. Scrutiny of the school's assessment results indicates that pupils who start in the EYFS and complete their education at the school make particularly good progress and achieve well in relation to their abilities. Pupils with SEND and EAL, who are given excellent support by the enrichment team and their teachers in class, make

good progress in relation to their starting points. Some pupils with EAL progress rapidly towards acquiring a good working knowledge of English. More able pupils also make good progress due to the extra challenge built into teachers' planning, which encourages them to take charge of their own learning, as well as additional stimulus in challenge clubs.

- 3.5 Pupils' achievements are well supported by their positive attitudes towards learning. They settle efficiently to tasks, and their high levels of concentration are a notable trait. Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative skills yet work equally well independently. Their good behaviour in class contributes to a purposeful learning environment, and the positive relationships that they share with one another and their teachers have a beneficial impact on their achievement. A very large majority of parents and all the pupils who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that they are making good progress.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.7 In the EYFS, staff provide an excellent range of activities which enable children of all ages and abilities to have fun whilst investigating and developing their understanding. They work well as a team to create a stimulating and interesting learning environment that is welcoming and safe. Activities are prepared in response to the children's interests and are supported by an excellent range of resources. Adult-led sensory, physical, auditory and kinaesthetic learning experiences are well balanced with child-led 'Little Explorer Time'. The learning programme is enriched through the use of specialist staff, such as in French, music, physical education (PE), dance and swimming. 'Stretch and Learn' sessions help the children to re-focus and they are also introduced to other languages such as Spanish. Although the school does not have an outdoor area, good use is made of the main school playground and the local parks, where staff provide activity boxes to enable children to engage in a range of learning tasks. This element of the children's learning experience is less-well developed than the otherwise excellent provision.
- 3.8 For older pupils, the curriculum is generally wide and gives sufficient time to subjects. It is carefully managed by senior leaders and supports the school's aims well. The comprehensive, well planned and up-to-date curriculum policy promotes a distinctive approach to learning that emphasises the acquisition of skills and lifelong learning tools. The school improvement plan prioritises the increased utilisation of cross-curricular teaching themes, which have been successfully implemented for younger pupils, but is at an early stage of development for older ones. The primacy given by the school to discussion and debate, both within lessons and in extra-curricular activities, ensures pupils are aware of, and consider, both sides of opposing arguments. Curriculum planning across the school is predominantly detailed and most documentation is of a consistently high standard, an improvement since the previous inspection. The leadership has identified that curricular provision for the performing and expressive arts is at an early stage of development, as music, dance and art are included, but drama is not offered to all age groups. ICT is taught as a discrete subject, and is also used in other subjects, especially for research. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support teaching. Resources, including tablet computers, are plentiful and the suitably stocked library is accommodated in the unique surroundings of the original Chelsea library. Since the previous inspection, sport has been developed through the use of nearby playing

fields and swimming pools, and a growing programme of matches for both girls and boys. There is excellent provision for personal, social, health and economic education, not only in discrete lessons, but also encompassed within other subjects and assemblies. In accordance with its aim to prepare pupils for life in an ever-evolving world, the school ensures that pupils are introduced to a range of adult professions and helped to develop a strong sense of self-knowledge. All the parents who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with the range of curricular subjects.

- 3.9 Pupils with SEND receive excellent support, both in class and in support groups or individually, and their targets are reviewed regularly. Extra-curricular booster clubs further support their progress. Pupils with EAL are quickly integrated and develop their knowledge of English through immersion in class and small group support from a specialist teacher. The more able pupils are well extended through challenge clubs, which develop their thinking and problem-solving skills such as the Latin club.
- 3.10 The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and trips. Well-attended activities cover a wide range of interests, from Ancient Greek to Mandarin and ukulele to fencing. Outside organisations and individuals, such as professional footballers, a neighbouring ballet school and a local comedy club add to the wide range of experiences provided. Individual music lessons are available and there are a choir, band and ukulele groups. Pupils may request new activities through the school council, and staff offer their own interests. Regular theatre visits and performances in school, visits to galleries and museums and day and residential field-trips, further enhance the pupils' educational experience. Almost all the parents and pupils who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with the range of extra-curricular activities and experiences available.
- 3.11 The school has developed very good links with the community. Through their support of many charities, pupils learn to be kind, look after one another and to be good global citizens, in line with the school's aims. Community groups visit to support the teaching of health and well-being and also provide useful links with local services. The pupils develop a sense of their place within the community when they use nearby playing fields, swimming pools and the parish church.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.13 In the EYFS, meticulous, child-centred planning ensures that all children make progress that is usually excellent and invariably good. Excellent relationships and a nurturing environment give children the confidence to acquire the skills and capacity to develop and learn effectively. All the staff engage extremely well with the children and are enthusiastic about their work. Adults' high expectations motivate the children to set themselves challenging targets. All children are confident that their ideas will be taken seriously and that their interests will be incorporated in planning. Each classroom has a 'wall of wonder' on which each child has a line of enquiry that they would like to explore. Teaching assistants are involved in planning so that they can match their interventions with individual children's needs. Children with EAL and SEND are well supported because the staff know each child and their individual needs and interests so well. In the diverse area of London in which the school is set, a few children do not have English as their first language. Staff quickly identify their needs and provide additional support. The strong grounding they are given in the EYFS prepares them extremely well for the next stage of their learning.

- 3.14 Teaching throughout the school supports its aims to provide a high-quality education in a stimulating environment and for pupils to acquire knowledge and skills for a rapidly changing world. Creative displays enhance learning and celebrate pupils' achievements and their work. The pupils confirmed in interviews with inspectors that they feel valued and supported by their teachers and the mutual respect between them is evident. When unsure, they are happy to ask their teachers for help and are confident that this will be given.
- 3.15 The teachers' planning is detailed and well informed by assessment. It incorporates creative learning activities within meaningful contexts that address the needs and interests of all pupils. Whenever possible, teachers provide opportunities for practical activities that foster enthusiasm and application and positively enhance behaviour and learning. Teachers typically employ a varied range of tasks and make excellent use of resources, carefully managing time so that pupils remain alert and learning is brisk. Consequently pupils make good and often excellent progress during lessons.
- 3.16 The teachers' thorough subject knowledge and excellent interaction with the pupils inspire them to complete tasks to a high standard. The school's approach that identifies six characteristics of successful learning, results in skills-based teaching which was well used to promote pupil progress in the lessons observed. Teachers encourage pupils to develop independent learning skills and they respond enthusiastically, such as when self-selecting activities appropriate to their ability or researching information about a topic. Teachers make excellent use of open questioning which promotes deeper thinking and is an effective mechanism for checking and sharing understanding. This demonstrates progress since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils are effective communicators and discuss their subject knowledge confidently.
- 3.17 Teaching demonstrates a firm commitment to inclusion and each child's learning needs are well addressed through tasks which match their level of knowledge and understanding. Pupils with SEND, EAL and the more able are very well supported by teachers and learning support assistants during lessons. Detailed information by the specialist team suggests strategies to help staff understand and meet their needs. Teachers offer both booster classes and challenge groups as additional support. All pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves in almost every lesson so that they apply subject skills successfully at an appropriate level for their ability. Extension activities that encourage risk-taking are usually available and promote the progress of the most able very effectively.
- 3.18 The school employs a useful system of assessment that combines standardised tests and on-going teacher assessment that identifies and moderates the levels at which pupils are working. Pupils also undertake peer and self-assessment sensibly. As a result, teachers and senior leaders monitor pupils' progress most effectively. A new marking policy is widely used by most teachers, but not all, and this is well understood by the pupils. Marking usually provides clear guidance on next steps and pupils know the level at which they are working and what they must do to achieve their targets. Almost all pupils expressed the view in the pre-inspection questionnaire that teachers help them learn.

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 The contribution of the EYFS to children's well-being is excellent. The children are extremely happy at school and enjoy the wide range of activities provided for them. They learn to behave well, even in the pre-nursery, recognising and tolerating the needs and feelings of others. They play co-operatively and develop independence by choosing activities linked to the theme of the week suggested by one of the children. They feel free to use their imagination and are inquisitive, exploring a classroom 'deep sea cave' with great interest and enthusiasm. Excellent links with the main school and the regular use of its facilities mean that the children are prepared and ready to transfer at the end of the EYFS.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual awareness is of an extremely high quality. They engage reflectively with the weekly assembly theme and take advantage of opportunities to build each other's self-esteem. Pupils from a wide range of nationalities also benefit spiritually from attending the values-focused monthly assembly that takes place in the awe-inspiring setting of the local parish church, listening respectfully to the national anthem played at the beginning. They go on to celebrate and share their learning, and an atmosphere of warm appreciation pervades. During the upper school debates, pupils demonstrated strong emotional maturity, both in the content of their speeches delivered with great self-confidence, as well as the tenacity in which they addressed points of information.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate excellent moral awareness. They are polite and welcoming and, from an early age, show a well-developed sense of right and wrong. There is an understanding of the fundamental values of Britishness. Pupils learn about criminal and civil laws through their study of British history as well as through regular class discussions and assemblies that address current news stories. They are aware of moral issues, such as when older pupils discussed the underlying emotions in a song and identified that its theme was racism. Pupils respect each other's needs, interests and views and regularly consider philosophical and ethical questions. They work co-operatively and, when faced with a problem, are able to work out what went wrong and how to solve it through discussion with their 'buddy'. They readily discuss their school 'children's charter' and can explain what is meant by good conduct.
- 4.5 Pupils have a strong well-developed sense of social responsibility. They develop leadership skills by taking on duties within their class and their understanding of the democratic process is reinforced through class elections for form captains and school council representatives. Older pupils see themselves as role models for younger members of the community and relish the opportunity to take on more responsibility. Senior pupils may apply to become house captains or head pupils and they take their duties seriously. Pupils are committed to helping others as reflected in the range of charitable events in which they take part. Topics, such as the rain forest, enable the pupils to take a compassionate view of the world around them. In geography pupils considered social, economic and environmental factors when participating in a democratic vote in response to the question 'Should the coast be defended?'

- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. School trips and special events, such as the annual UN Day, help pupils to embrace western cultural traditions whilst developing their understanding of the wide range of cultures represented within the school community. Pupils relate exceptionally well with their peers from different cultural backgrounds and show a genuine interest in their experiences and beliefs. They are also secure in their understanding of British institutions and services. Pupils in Year 6 have visited parliament, and at the time of the inspection, older pupils participated enthusiastically in lively debates. Their planning and delivery demonstrated an excellent understanding of the shape and structure of British parliamentary debating. Pupils enjoy deepening their knowledge and understanding of Britain in history and are able to make comparisons between historical and current events such as when studying religious intolerance in Stuart Britain.
- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, pupils exhibit an excellent standard 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 In the EYFS all children are well cared for. Staff model strong teamwork extremely well and this provides a happy and secure environment for children to form positive emotional bonds with their key person and to know that their feelings and wishes are respected. This in turn enables them to develop good relationships with other children. Children know they should run around to keep healthy and enjoy healthy snacks of fruit. They identify some of the different types of food such as carbohydrate, dairy, fruit and vegetables. Any concerns about a child's progress are raised at weekly meetings; these are then discussed with parents and, when necessary, referred to an external agency. Parents are well known within the setting so a feeling of mutual trust makes it easier to discuss support when it is needed.
- 4.10 The school provides highly effective support and guidance to all its pupils. Staff work closely together and communicate the welfare needs of pupils most effectively on a daily basis. They are highly committed to promoting pupils' well-being and know their pupils well so that they act promptly to find solutions to any problems. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few pupils expressed reservations about teachers' monitoring of their workload and having someone to turn to with a difficulty. However, during discussions, pupils spoke warmly of the relationship they have with their teachers and said they appreciate their care and concern, commenting that they always make time to listen to them. This view was supported by inspectors' observations of relationships and from scrutiny of pastoral records. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a clear mechanism for documenting causes for concern about individual pupils.
- 4.11 The school sets high standards of courtesy and behaviour, which help pupils to develop excellent and productive relationships between themselves and staff. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they understand the system of rewards and sanctions. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed dissatisfaction with teachers' fairness in awarding rewards and sanctions. However, in meetings and informal exchanges, inspectors found that pupils were strongly of the opinion that the system is fair and effective. Inspectors noted a variety of opportunities for achievements and positive citizenship to be rewarded and scrutiny of records indicates that a fair and thorough system is in place. Senior staff members monitor pastoral policies and incidents carefully, and any cases of bullying

or inappropriate behaviour are followed up and communicated at staff meetings. In the questionnaires and in interviews, pupils had no concerns about bullying, and in the pre-inspection questionnaires most agreed that staff deal with it appropriately.

- 4.12 The pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through the school's fitness programme, which encourages them to be healthy and enhances their awareness of the importance of exercise. However inspectors agreed with views expressed by many pupils that, whilst lunches are freshly prepared each day, they offer limited choice and that the short time available for each sitting is not conducive to an enjoyable dining experience.
- 4.13 Pupils have excellent opportunities to express their views and ideas through the school council, which has representatives from all year groups who report back to their classes. Suggestions for school improvement are taken into account by senior staff. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of pupils did not agree that they had opportunities to voice their views. However, pupils who met with inspectors were happy that the school council successfully represents their views and cited changes to the lunch menu and the provision of new playground equipment as examples.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to widen educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.15 The quality of welfare, health and safety is sound.
- 4.16 The school, including the EYFS, employs effective measures in most areas to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils, although the monitoring of policies and procedures has not always been sufficiently timely or thorough. The safeguarding policy was updated during the inspection so that it met the most recent statutory guidance by the end of the inspection period. All staff have a secure knowledge of safeguarding and its implementation because they receive annual training reinforced by displays in their staffrooms which remind them of key information and contacts. The designated leads have received the required higher level training commensurate with their duties. All staff have been checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. On occasions since the previous inspection, some staff started work before all the checks, including barred listing, had been completed. More recently, such cases have been very rare. The risk to pupils was limited as the school had supervision arrangements in place for the brief period while the results of checks were awaited. Pupils say they feel safe in school. An annual health and safety audit identifies areas that need attention.
- 4.17 The premises are well maintained and thorough risk assessments are in place for the school's facilities and external visits. Regular fire drills are held and fire fighting and detection equipment are maintained at the correct intervals. All staff undertake fire awareness training as part of their induction, and most have also been trained as fire wardens. Whilst the school has addressed the required actions in both its last fire risk assessment and health and safety audit in order of priority, at the beginning of the inspection its records did not clearly indicate when actions had been completed, nor that their completion had been monitored at company level.
- 4.18 Staff at both sites implement arrangements for pupils who fall ill or hurt themselves in school effectively. Sufficient numbers of staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aiders, and correct records of treatment are carefully maintained. Any

pupils who have an ongoing medical condition or needs arising from SEND are carefully supported.

- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and suitably stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 Until recently, governance for all the company's schools was exercised centrally by a governance board. Through this system, the company has provided strong and much valued support for the school and its new leadership in terms of finance, health and safety, technology and human resources. Support has included a useful review of teaching and learning. Historically there has been a governor with special interest in EYFS and the setting values the good support that they have received. The company's recent restructuring of its operations has coincided with a major change in the personnel exercising governance. Shortcomings have been identified in the centralised organisation of governance, reducing its effectiveness by limiting governors' capacity to gain a deep understanding of the differing characteristics, strengths and needs of each school, as well as the rigorous oversight of their regulatory responsibilities. As a result, measures to give the school its own governing body, supported by the company, are nearing completion. Inspection evidence supports these measures.
- 5.3 Governance is strongly committed to promoting high quality standards in teaching and learning and to ensuring that material and staffing resources support the school's aims effectively. Consequently on-going investment enables the school's leadership to initiate improvements to enhance the educational experience of the pupils. Governance is well informed by termly reports from the leadership, and there is direct involvement with the school's daily workings, strengths and the areas that require improvement.
- 5.4 The governance board has not been sufficiently rigorous in monitoring the school's policies, audits and staff recruitment checks to ensure that they met the most recent regulatory requirements. All were up-to-date by the end of the inspection. Governors undertake an annual review of safeguarding, but this has not been clearly recorded in minutes of the full board.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 The strong commitment of senior leaders to promoting the school's aims and ethos ensures that the personal and educational needs of pupils are well met. Throughout the school an atmosphere of mutual respect and awareness of the principles of democracy is strongly evident and promoted well by staff at all levels. Senior leaders carry out their responsibilities for day-to-day management and school improvement conscientiously, and they maintain very effective communication with all staff. A regular system of monitoring by senior leaders of teaching and pupils' work, which includes the identification of strengths and areas for development, has contributed strongly to improved standards of teaching and learning. Their collaborative style of management encourages staff to reflect on and evaluate their practice so that they are able to identify areas for improvement as well as strengths in provision. Leaders of each section of the school ensure that at every level staff

are supported, consulted and welcome to offer their ideas for improvement. Departmental heads and subject co-ordinators provide good oversight of their subjects.

- 5.7 The leadership team ensures that in daily practice pupils are well safeguarded. It has been less rigorous in ensuring, through regular review, that all policies and recruitment procedures are kept up-to-date in line with changes in regulations. Checks on new staff have not always been completed in a timely manner. However, the school had taken steps to minimise the possible risk to pupils, for example by supervising the staff concerned.
- 5.8 Senior leaders, many of whom are relatively new in post, have initiated improvements that are having a beneficial impact on pupils' academic standards and well-being. Priorities for development are clearly set out in the school improvement plan which is coming to the end of its current cycle. The new leadership has a clear vision for the future direction of the school and its capacity to improve.
- 5.9 The carefully planned induction process for new staff ensures they understand their responsibilities in relation to health and safety, welfare and safeguarding and professional development. The annual appraisal system is well established and linked to the identification of training needs. Staff are encouraged to undertake further professional development through short courses, information from which is shared with colleagues, and longer training; for example, several assistants are working towards achieving qualified teaching status.
- 5.10 In the EYFS, senior staff are highly effective in evaluating practice and securing continuous improvement. Exemplary systems for supervision, performance management and professional development set challenging targets for each member of staff and also affirm their efforts. For example, the introduction of a 'curriculum champions' scheme that gives staff a chance to develop an area of expertise and management skills has had a positive impact on the learning and development of the children. Frequent meetings, excellent teamwork and well-embedded reflective practice provide the context for regular self-evaluation to enable the setting to set new challenges and adapt to change.
- 5.11 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children and with the quality of communication with the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents all agreed that their children are happy and safe in school. Almost all agreed that there is support for the most able, any instances of bullying are handled well and that the school is well led and managed. In conversation, parents praised the new leadership and the friendliness and kindness of staff.
- 5.12 The school maintains excellent relationships with parents in accordance with its aim to work in partnership with them, providing an open door policy of regular communication. In the EYFS excellent relationships with parents help all children settle in quickly. Parents know they are welcome and help their children to settle each morning. Throughout the school, concerns are handled with care and in accordance with the school's policy and records indicate that most are resolved informally.
- 5.13 Parents have many excellent opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children through curriculum coffee mornings, attending assemblies, concerts, sports events and special school occasions such as Thanksgiving and the Summer Arts Festival. Some parents also help on outings, share their home

language, give talks about their faith and home culture and help with clubs. Each class has a representative on the active parents' association. The committee has weekly meetings with the school leadership team and arranges a wide variety of social and charity events throughout the year.

- 5.14 The parents of current and prospective pupils receive a prospectus giving a glimpse of life at the school, and other necessary information is available on the school's website. They are then invited to visit and meet the school's leadership. When pupils join the school they receive a full and helpful welcome pack from the school as well as one from the parents' association. Parents of pupils already in the school receive weekly newsletters that are specific to their child's age. They may easily make contact with the school through email and senior leaders ensure they are available at morning drop off.
- 5.15 A full report giving useful information about their child's progress is sent to parents each term. These reports give an accurate and pertinent assessment of each child's progress in every subject with targets for further improvement. A few weeks later there is a parents' consultation evening to discuss points raised in the report.

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