



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
SHERRARDSWOOD SCHOOL**

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Sherrardswood School

Full Name of School	Sherrardswood School
DfE Number	919/6047
EYFS Number	EY297342
Registered Charity Number	311070
Address	Sherrardswood School Lockleys Welwyn Hertfordshire AL6 0BJ
Telephone Number	01438 714282
Fax Number	01438 840616
Email Address	headmistress@sherrardswood.herts.sch.uk
Head	Mrs Lynda Corry
Chair of Governors	Mr Ali Khan
Age Range	2 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	278
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (162 boys; 116 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 5 5-11: 129 3-5 (EYFS): 17 11-18: 127
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Claire Armitage
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	23 Sep 2014 to 26 Sep 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 February 2011.

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 chair of governors and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, 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 Gwen Caddock	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Batchelor	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mrs Pauline Clark	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Robin Davies	Team Inspector (Former Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Steven Pearce	Team Inspector (Head of Department, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Ann Prior	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, ISA school)
Miss Patricia Griffin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sherrardswood School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from two to eighteen years. The school aims to ensure that high quality teaching and learning help its pupils to achieve the highest standard of academic success according to their ability. It seeks to discover and develop the talents, personality and self-worth of each pupil, ensuring personal, social, physical and creative development, with an appreciation of different ideas, backgrounds and cultures, and for pupils to grow into caring and self-disciplined adults. The school also seeks to involve parents and others in the community in partnership to promote sound education. The school is a registered charity and a charitable company limited by guarantee. The governing body of eight members, four of whom are new appointees, fulfils the role of trustees to the charity.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1928 by Ethel Joy Wragg, a pioneer of creative and child-centred education. It occupies a 28-acre site with recreational areas and playing fields, located just outside Welwyn Village. The junior school is based in Lockleys House, a Queen Anne manor house, and Mimram House offers purpose-built accommodation for the senior school. The majority of pupils move from the junior to the senior school. Those who leave transfer to local independent or maintained schools. The school includes a registered setting for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.3 The school has 278 pupils on roll. Of these, 22 attend the EYFS, 129 are in the junior school and 127 are in the senior school, of whom 31 are in Years 12 and 13. The ability profile of pupils in the junior school is above the national average. The ability profile of the senior school in Year 7 is slightly above the national average, with a fairly wide range of abilities represented, and in Year 10 and the sixth form it is in line with the national average, with a wide range of abilities represented. Pupils are mainly from professional and business families. They represent many ethnic groups, reflecting the area in which the school is situated. They travel to the school from a wide area.
- 1.4 The school has identified 60 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), covering a range of conditions and mainly dyslexia. Of these, 48 pupils receive specialist learning support, 8 of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Ten pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). Five of these pupils receive support for their English, and five are assessed as fluent users of English who require no additional support.
- 1.5 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 Achievement and learning are good throughout the junior and senior schools, well-supported by the good curriculum, which offers an appropriate range of subjects as pupils move through the school, and by good quality teaching. Pupils with SEND make excellent progress and flourish in the caring and thoughtfully planned environment of the school. Pupils with EAL and the most able pupils achieve well, with appropriate provision made. The most able pupils benefit particularly from additional courses available at GCSE. As yet, programmes which have successfully raised standards in the senior school have not been implemented in the junior school, resulting in inconsistent standards. In the EYFS, the educational programmes cover all areas of learning, and allow children to reach age-appropriate levels of development, but improvement is required in terms of the provision for imaginative play and independent learning, and in the area of self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement.
- 2.2 Greatly improved pastoral care, personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE) programmes, and attention to the development of the individual have resulted in the pupils' excellent standards of personal development throughout the school. The recommendation of the previous inspection for development in this area has been met. Provision for the well-being of children in the EYFS is good. All policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils are in place, implemented and well recorded.
- 2.3 Governance is good, with a newly appointed governing body continuing support of the leadership and management of the school. The governing body understands its legal responsibilities and has plans in place to ensure that these responsibilities are discharged. New governors are bringing significant expertise to the board. Close links with the school's leadership are enabling the governors to get to know the school and informing their approach to future planning. Leadership and management are good. A new senior management structure has been put in place to establish direct oversight of and responsibility for the two sections of the school. Excellent features of previous strategies are being developed to ensure consistent standards throughout the school. Links with parents, carers and guardians are particularly strong, and questionnaire responses indicate that parents are highly appreciative of the school's provision of information and of the education and care provided for their children.

2.(b) Action points**(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Consolidate the work of the newly constituted senior leadership team to ensure continued improvement and consistent standards throughout the school.
 2. Establish a system in the EYFS of rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation of the setting to raise the standards of children's learning and development.
 3. Plan for and provide opportunities for children in the EYFS to investigate, explore and pursue challenging individual opportunities, both indoors and outside.

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 aims to discover and develop the talents and personality of each pupil, irrespective of academic ability.
- 3.3 Pupils demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and skills in academic and extra-curricular activities. They listen sensitively to each other and speak with increasing confidence as they progress through the school. Pupils read confidently and with enjoyment. The quality of their writing is good across all subjects, and the more able explore well beyond what is asked of them. Pupils of all ages develop their personal creativity in art and creative writing sessions. An excellent poem written in the style of Carol Ann Duffy illustrated individual creativity and sophisticated linguistic ability. Pupils are confident in applying their mathematical skills, not only within the subject but as tools in physics and chemistry; they learn to think logically, and higher order skills are precisely used by the more able Year 10 pupils who are studying further mathematics. Year 2 pupils articulated an outstanding appreciation of mathematics as they explored scientific concepts. Pupils of all ages achieve well in both their games and physical education (PE) lessons and many related physical activities.
- 3.4 Pupils achieve recognition in a range of extra-curricular activities, including the projection of their artwork on the facade of Buckingham Palace following success with the national Face Britain project. A first prize was also secured in a national schools photography competition in 2011. All pupils studying food technology have achieved food safety awards from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, and both junior and senior pupils have been successful in a technology tournament organised by the local Rotary Club. Pupils have a record of achievement at district level in field events, cross country, swimming and rounders, and individuals have progressed to county and club trials in rugby and football. Many pupils have achieved bronze and silver levels in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. In recent years, all applicants to university have gained places, and a large majority of pupils have achieved acceptance at their first-choice institution.
- 3.5 The attainment of pupils in the junior school cannot be measured in relation to a fixed national average, but based on work scrutiny and lessons seen it is judged to be good. The following analysis uses the national data for years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools. There was a slight decline in standards between 2011 and 2013. The results for 2014 indicate an improvement with all pupils achieving at least 5 A* to C grades. A-level results have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools at both A* to B and A* to E and are in line with the ability of the pupils. Results achieved in 2014, for which nationally standardised data is not yet available, show that the pupils' achievements have exceeded predictions held by the school based on nationally standardised testing.
- 3.6 These results, as well as evidence seen during the inspection in lessons and in work scrutinised, show that all pupils, including the most able and those with EAL, make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. School records show that pupils with SEND make excellent progress, evaluated using nationally

standardised measures to compare GCSE results with predictions. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate great satisfaction with the progress made by their children.

- 3.7 Pupils of all ages have excellent attitudes to their work; they are motivated to do well and feel thoroughly supported in their efforts by their teachers. Highly enthusiastic responses were observed in many subjects in lessons seen during the inspection.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.

3.9 The curriculum is broad and carefully planned, covering the requisite areas of learning and providing an effective educational experience much valued by pupils and parents. The school achieves its aim to bring out the best in pupils as they move through the school, enabling older pupils to make informed choices appropriate to their needs and to develop as independent learners. As yet, opportunities for independent thought and work are more limited in the junior school. Curricular support for those with SEND is excellent, as are the systems for identifying and providing specialist support. Close liaison between the specialist staff and class teachers, using individual education plans, ensures that the plans are very well implemented and monitored. Good provision is made for pupils with EAL when they enter the school, which ensures that they are able to access the curriculum and rapidly become competent users of English. Provision for the more able pupils includes suitable tasks and courses to challenge and allow them to make good progress in line with their abilities.

3.10 The primary focus of the curriculum in the junior school is on literacy and numeracy, which contributes greatly to the pupils' achievement in many areas. This strong foundation enables pupils to benefit from well-planned topic work, including the humanities, and practical and creative subjects. Learning is enhanced by specialist teaching in French, art and design, music, drama and PE, extending pupils' understanding and knowledge of the world and of society within a holistic framework. The junior school curriculum provides good preparation for entry to the senior school as well as to local independent and maintained secondary schools.

3.11 Pupils in the senior school benefit from a broad and appropriate curriculum in Years 7 and 8, which includes a wide range of subjects with good timetable allocation for the development of core subjects and skills. Pupils have an unrestricted choice of options to complement the compulsory core subjects at GCSE, with courses starting at the beginning of Year 9. The wide range of options at A level results in individualised curricular provision, to suit all abilities and interests, which is a strength and fully supports the aims of the school. A very well-structured programme of support and guidance for career and university options enables older pupils to make well-informed choices.

3.12 The academic curriculum is enriched by an excellent programme of extra-curricular subjects and activities, much appreciated by pupils of all ages. This provides opportunities for pupils' personal, social, physical and creative development, in line with the school's aims. Activities such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme provide opportunities for pupils to support the local community through volunteering, as well as developing their leadership skills. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents expressed concern with the extra-

curricular opportunities available to pupils. Inspection evidence showed that a wide range of activities is offered.

- 3.13 An appropriately equipped sports hall is used by both junior and senior pupils and excellent use is made of on-site sporting facilities to ensure that curricular and extra-curricular provision includes a good range of sports. Pupils engage competitively with other local schools in a variety of sporting activities, and have access to external sport providers and coaching on site.
- 3.14 The extended school day ensures that all pupils can complete their homework in a supervised setting if so wished. This is highly valued by both pupils and parents. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by a large number of educational trips and visits that provide breadth to the pupils' experience.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching is successful in promoting pupils' progress and supporting the aims of the school. Small teaching groups and strong understanding by teachers of the needs of individual pupils enable good progress to be made, and in nearly a quarter of lessons seen, this progress was judged to be excellent. In a small number of lessons, teaching did not use prior assessment to inform planning or encourage pupils to think independently, limiting their learning and progress. Effective use of resources and time result in a good standard of learning.
- 3.17 In the junior school, staff have high expectations of pupils and ensure that lessons are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. In many lessons seen, the pace was well matched to the needs of pupils, sometimes moving more slowly for consolidation and then quickening to a brisk pace to stimulate and engage pupils, resulting in thorough learning. Explanations are clear and tasks include pupils working together in pairs or small groups. In examples of the best teaching, questioning was used well to encourage pupils to think for themselves and generate their own ideas. Interesting and original approaches are used; for example, in a Year 4 English lesson historical and geographical settings were used as ideas for story writing. Planning includes the use of information and communication technology (ICT) by the pupils. Marking is thorough and rigorous, and pupils consider that this helps them to learn. The programme of educational testing is well used to track pupils' progress and to inform intervention: further testing has been recently introduced to extend this work.
- 3.18 Recent initiatives in the senior school, with a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and developing excellence, have resulted in many lessons which encourage and challenge pupils to fulfil their potential and achieve high standards. In the best examples seen, carefully planned teaching fostered independence and led to rapid progress. In a small minority of lessons, overly directed teaching limited opportunities for the most able pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a majority of pupils indicated that they are encouraged to think for themselves and to work independently.
- 3.19 In the senior school marking is diagnostic, enabling pupils to progress. A comprehensive national programme of testing is in place. Excellent use is made of the vast range of data for planning teaching and to monitor the progress of pupils, ensuring effective intervention when needed. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a majority of pupils indicated that teachers' marking and homework

assignments help them to learn. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to support pupils' learning.

- 3.20 Pupils with SEND or EAL are very well supported, and carefully targeted support was observed in lessons. Information from individual education plans is shared effectively with teaching staff and ensures that individual needs are carefully considered and provision is made. In the majority of lessons, the most able pupils benefit from open-ended tasks, as well as opportunities to extend their learning in more advanced courses such as further mathematics GCSE.
- 3.21 The school ensures that the provision set out in statements of special educational needs is fully implemented.

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 school is successful in achieving its aim to help the pupils to develop a sense of self-worth and to grow into caring and self-disciplined adults. The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. From an early age the pupils are confident, take pride in their presentation and their work, and are keen to reach their full potential. They appreciate non-material aspects of life, particularly in drama and in art. The concern pupils show for others within the school as well as in the wider community shows that they are emotionally mature for their age. Pupils' self-esteem is strong, and the dedicated and caring staff set a good example by treating any contribution to class discussion with respect and giving praise when deserved. The pupils' awareness of their strengths was reinforced by their peers as they explored the qualities necessary for different roles within their enterprise team.
- 4.3 Moral development is of a high standard. Pupils distinguish between right and wrong from an early age. In the senior school pupils demonstrate good progression, from discussions on topics related to philosophies of religion, including Christian beliefs on forgiveness in Year 7 to debates on sensitive moral issues in the sixth form. Pupils learn to apply their knowledge to moral issues. School assemblies also reinforce messages to pupils about becoming good citizens.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is excellent throughout the school. Pupils are mindful of the needs of those who have disabilities, and are keen to help people less fortunate than themselves by raising funds during a charity week. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility, such as within the senior school council, which is run by a member of the sixth form. Other sixth-form pupils take on other responsibilities, such as helping with younger pupils or running after-school clubs. The PSHRE programme of study promotes pupils' economic awareness from Year 9 and political awareness from Year 11. Pupils enjoy the opportunities for taking on responsibility, working in the local community and taking on challenges through participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- 4.5 The cultural development of the pupils is strong throughout the school. The pupils show sensitivity to the different cultures within the school community, and relationships between pupils of different backgrounds are good. The wide-ranging programme of trips extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of both English cultural events and those of other traditions. Visits abroad provide pupils with direct experience of other cultures. The PSHRE programme provides further opportunities for discussion and the development of understanding of other cultures and religions.
- 4.6 Significant improvements have been made to the PSHRE programme throughout both the senior and junior schools, meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection. The conduct, courtesy, concern for others, helpfulness and friendliness of the pupils demonstrate realisation of the aims of the school, and excellent personal development achieved as pupils move through the school.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The care provided to pupils and their personal development are key strengths of the school, further developed since the previous inspection. Class teachers, tutors and mentors know their pupils extremely well and encourage them academically and in their personal development.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and pupils of all ages stated that they feel comfortable to approach staff. A robust set of procedures and range of staff meetings ensure effective communication about pupil matters and inform action and support. Relationships are strong amongst the pupils; they show concern for their friends. Pupils demonstrated a strong sense of belonging at the school and commented that they feel valued.
- 4.10 Pupils are made aware of the need to eat healthily and to take regular exercise through the PSHRE programme. The school provides a good choice of freshly prepared food, which pupils appreciate. Physical education and games lessons, extra-curricular sports clubs and outdoor play areas encourage the pupils to be active.
- 4.11 The school promotes good behaviour through a system of rewards and sanctions that is well understood and respected by the pupils. It has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy, and maintains appropriate procedures and record keeping, and concerns are addressed quickly and efficiently. In questionnaire responses, pupils indicated strongly that bullying is not a concern, and this was confirmed in pupil interviews. A small minority indicated that they do not feel that sanctions are fairly used, however in interviews, pupils expressed that they are happy with the use of sanctions. Records seen during the inspection showed appropriate use of sanctions.
- 4.12 A small minority of pupils indicated the view that they do not have an opportunity to voice their opinions. However, during the inspection pupils said that they value the opportunity that the school councils in both the junior and senior schools give them to air their views and ideas through elected representatives. The councils' successes include the introduction of a chess club and of water fountains.
- 4.13 A suitable accessibility plan is in place which covers the needs of a number of wide-ranging requirements for pupils with SEND. Pupils supported by this plan were observed fully involved and engaged in lessons, actively encouraged and supported by staff and peers alike.

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 Safeguarding policies and procedures have regard to current official guidance, and at all levels staff have received suitable training. Good induction programmes for new staff ensure that up-to-date information about procedures is carefully disseminated. Positive working relationships have been established with local agencies, who are supportive of the work of the school. The safe employment policy and procedures are thoroughly implemented, and the required records of checks on staff are carefully maintained.
- 4.16 The school has appropriate measures in place to reduce the risk from hazards, including fire safety. A comprehensive policy is in place; the fire risk assessment is undertaken by an external professional, and regular checks, reviews and servicing are fully recorded. Fire drills take place at regular intervals and are well recorded, showing successful evacuation. Individual plans are in place to ensure the safe evacuation of any individual with a disability.
- 4.17 Effective policies and measures are in place and are carefully implemented to promote the health and safety of pupils. Risk assessments are clear and thorough, including those for educational visits. An appropriate medical room is provided, where pupils can be looked after if they are ill or injured. Medicines are securely stored, and comprehensive medical information is kept confidentially. Many staff have undertaken first-aid training at various levels. Careful records are maintained and training is kept up to date. Excellent provision is made for pupils requiring support for specific disabilities.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and correctly stored for at least the previous three years, as required.

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 current governing body took up its responsibilities in June 2014, with four new governors, including the chairman, joining the three elected parent governors. Records show that the previous board fulfilled its legal responsibilities and had a good knowledge of the school. A handover period allowed the new governors to gather considerable information and an insight into the working of the school, resulting in an appropriate preliminary plan for action to improve the educational environment. An inaugural meeting of the new board has taken place and a regular schedule is being planned for meetings of the whole board. The board has made a good start in its support for the school. The school's management has made regular and informative reports to the board. The current board received an update from the management at their first meeting.
- 5.3 The new leadership of the board has worked closely with the school's senior leadership team, and has confirmed the changes which have been made to the structure of the senior leadership team. The newly appointed governors are predominantly heads of other schools who bring a wide range of educational expertise to the board. The new board, with experienced leadership, is giving effective support to the school's management. The roles of new governors have now been defined, in order to use their expertise for the benefit of the school. Following extensive consultation with parents, pupils and staff, plans for refurbishment and development are being implemented, for example in the redevelopment of the EYFS area. Governance has co-ordinated present development planning with the previous 2013/2016 whole-school development plan to ensure continuity in the progression of the school.
- 5.4 A governor has been appointed to take responsibility for safeguarding and has appropriate training and expertise to undertake this role. Dates have been settled for the future required annual review of safeguarding and the preparation of the associated report.

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 leadership and management of the school are successful in meeting its aims of ensuring that pupils of all abilities achieve the highest academic success of which they are capable, and grow into responsible adults. The senior leadership team successfully discharges its delegated responsibilities for policy implementation and safeguarding pupils throughout the school.
- 5.7 Leadership and management set out to parents and pupils a clear vision in the aims and ethos of the school. This vision is taken forward into practice and results in good standards of education across the junior and senior schools, and in the excellent personal development of pupils as they progress through the school. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

- 5.8 A new management structure has been established: the head leads the senior leadership team that includes two deputy heads, one for the junior school and one for the senior school. This deputy head role has been clearly defined, and includes responsibility for both the academic and pastoral work of the school. In the senior school this is a well-established post, although it is a new development for the junior school. The previous senior team set out in a detailed six-year development plan its response to the many means of self-evaluation which have been undertaken in the school. The self-evaluation gives a clear picture of all aspects of the school other than the EYFS, where it has not been successfully undertaken to underpin planning or improvement. A particular focus in the past year has been on developing the quality of teaching in the senior school, using the best practice and skills and enthusiasm of the teaching team. This has been very successfully implemented, with benefits for pupils' learning. Evaluations by both staff and pupils show that this has been valued and has resulted in improvement and some exciting teaching practice. This focus on teaching has not yet been implemented in the junior school to develop consistently high teaching standards. This has been identified as a target for future development.
- 5.9 In the senior school, the senior leadership team has established robust standards of monitoring and of self-evaluation. Heads of department conduct an annual departmental assessment that is successfully linked to a staff review process. This process has begun but is not yet fully established in the junior school. A very small number of parents raised concerns about the management of the school. Inspection evidence shows that management has supported the education and well-being of pupils well.
- 5.10 Throughout the school, management has successfully recruited well-qualified staff, and has developed a loyal team. The new leadership role in the junior school has been created to ensure that consistent standards are developed across the school. Staff development needs are identified through the staff review process, and in-house initiatives provide training and support. The senior leadership team is meticulous in providing the appropriate training for all staff to ensure that the school meets the needs of all pupils, and that high standards of safeguarding and of welfare, health and safety are maintained.
- 5.11 Links with parents are particularly strong. The school fosters excellent relationships with parents through its highly effective communication systems, and many and varied opportunities to be involved in school life. The strong partnership with parents, including those of the youngest children and of those with SEND, is maintained as pupils progress through the school, in line with the school's aim to involve parents in a genuine partnership to promote sound education. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were highly supportive of almost all aspects of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the curriculum provided, the progress their children make and the way in which the school looks after their children.
- 5.12 Staff are readily available to parents and the school's 'open door' policy allows the vast majority of queries or concerns to be dealt with swiftly and informally. Staff can equally be contacted by email and they respond promptly. The complaints policy sets out a clear and appropriate process and is available to parents. Records show that the policy is appropriately implemented as needed.
- 5.13 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. Daily contact books and academic planners ensure open communication

between home and school. Parents are invited to workshops to gain greater insight into teaching and learning. They are encouraged to support a variety of activities, including sporting fixtures, concerts and assemblies. They assist on outings and with school productions. The particular expertise of parents is used when appropriate to enhance the wider curriculum. The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association is particularly active and organises regular social and fund-raising events, the proceeds of which benefit the whole school.

- 5.14 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents expressed concern about bullying in the school. Inspection of detailed records of related issues shows that the small number of incidents have been appropriately dealt with, and pupils spoken to in discussions felt that there is no bullying in the school.
- 5.15 The comprehensive website, school prospectus and parent handbooks provide all parents of current and prospective pupils with detailed and relevant information. Throughout the year regular short reports are provided to parents, which keep them well informed of progress and the ways in which their children can improve. At the end of the summer term all parents receive a full and informative report on the progress made by their children, which includes helpful targets.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

6.1 The way in which the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend requires improvement. The caring staff know all children well and cater for their individual needs, including children with SEND or EAL. The educational programmes cover all areas of learning, and allow children to reach age-appropriate levels of development. As yet, insufficient provision is made for imaginative play or independent discovery. They are effective in providing firm foundations in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development, especially for children under the age of three, to ensure that they gain skills in these key areas. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Specialist teaching in music, French, PE and dance adds breadth to children's experiences and the development of their learning skills, especially in Reception. The use of ICT is limited across the setting. The easily accessible outside area is under used and limits opportunities for the children to investigate, explore and pursue challenging independent activities. Support for children with SEND is appropriate, although more able children are not always challenged and extended in the tasks set for them, as staff expectations are not always sufficiently high. Teaching is effective overall, and in the best examples, provides good opportunities for children to engage actively with their learning. Regular assessments are made and are used to plan individual 'next steps' to ensure satisfactory outcomes for all children. The required progress checks for children aged two have been effectively implemented, and the information shared with parents and carers. Relationships with parents are excellent and a true partnership is established between home and school, which benefits the children's learning and development, particularly in supporting the teaching of phonics and the development of independence. Parents were very positive about the setting in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and are highly appreciative of the care their children receive. Detailed reports give good information to parents about their children's progress in all areas of learning. Induction days and effective communication between home and school ensure that the children settle easily into school.

6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

6.2 Provision for the children's well-being is good. Generous staff ratios mean that all children, including those under three, are very well known and well cared for. Key people serve as good role models and promote the standards of behaviour and courtesy expected. Importance is placed on children's happiness and positive relationships at all levels, but limited opportunities for co-operative play are provided. The children are taught how to keep themselves safe and they are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. From an early age, children are taught how to manage their personal hygiene. Physical education and dance lessons promote a positive attitude to physical exercise, as seen in a Reception dance lesson. Care practices, particularly for the youngest children, are excellent. Children behave very well and play co-operatively and imaginatively whenever they are given the opportunity, for example when they were engaged in role play to prepare for the assembly to celebrate the school's birthday party. Transitions between classes within the setting

and beyond are carefully managed to ensure that all children are sensitively prepared for the next stage of their learning.

6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

6.3 Leadership and management require improvement. The newly formed governing body has a good knowledge of EYFS requirements, and a programme of refurbishments has recently begun, but no formal development plan for the EYFS has been prepared. Governors fulfil their obligations in monitoring policies and procedures. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and are enhanced by effective risk assessments. All staff have received the necessary training in child protection procedures and have been appropriately checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Children are well cared for in a safe and welcoming setting, although the resources available are not always used effectively to enhance the learning environment. The new senior leadership team shares a clear vision for the continuing progress of the EYFS, but this is not yet underpinned by appropriate planning. Managers support staff through informal supervision arrangements, but the lack of regular individual meetings does not fully enable staff to have opportunities to discuss ways to improve their effectiveness. Plans for regular formal supervisions and appraisals are at an early stage. Training needs to support children with SEND are considered a priority and have a positive impact on children's learning and development, although training in the EYFS framework has been less effective. Outstanding relationships have been established with parents, and when necessary with external agencies, giving support in responding to children's individual needs. All adults work hard to promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere.

6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

6.4 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS provision require improvement. Children of all abilities and needs, including those with SEND, make at least sound progress in relation to their starting points. They enjoy school and are particularly enthusiastic when they can be active and creative learners, as seen in a music and movement lesson. By the end of Reception, most children reach the expected Early Learning Goals. All children express themselves clearly and confidently in their conversations and listen attentively. They are able to share resources and take turns, and they display increasing levels of independence. The youngest children recognise colours and join in songs and rhymes enthusiastically. Older children are developing a good knowledge of phonics and can recognise numbers to 20 and beyond. Through celebrating different cultures and backgrounds, children develop mutual understanding and respect. They know right from wrong, and share, cooperate, and develop good relationships with their friends and the adults who care for them. Day-to-day safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are effective. Newly appointed managers are in the process of evaluating practice and planning for continuous improvement. The recommendation from the previous inspection to relocate the Reception classroom to the ground floor to provide access to outside activities has been implemented.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.