



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**PLUMTREE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Plumtree School

Full Name of School	<b>Plumtree School</b>
DfE Number	<b>891/6014</b>
Address	<b>Plumtree School Church Hill Plumtree Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG12 5ND</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01159 375859</b>
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Email Address	<b>plumtreeschool@tiscali.co.uk</b>
Acting Head	<b>Mrs Joanne Howarth</b>
Proprietors	<b>Mrs Joanne Howarth, Mr David Howarth, Mrs Lucy Simpson, Mr Philip Simpson</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>100</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (47 boys; 53 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): <b>36</b> 5-11: <b>64</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>100</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Lauren Oliver</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>09 Jun 2015 to 12 Jun 2015</b>

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

### **Inspectors**

Mr Graham Gorton

Mr Andrew Rudkin

Mrs Deborah Buckenham

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Plumtree School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the ages of 3 to 11. It occupies a site in the centre of Plumtree village, just south of Nottingham. The school was founded in September 1982 and was purchased in May 2015 by the current proprietors. Two of the proprietors currently work at the school as the acting head and the deputy head. The school is a limited company of which there are four directors from the same family who administer it.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a challenging and supportive environment where every child is valued as an individual and can reach their full potential. It seeks to ensure that each child's first crucial schooling years are enjoyable, memorable and draw them into the world of life-long learning.
- 1.3 The school site is centred on a Victorian building which is the former village school. This has been extended over the years. The school makes use of all the local facilities including the church, village hall and cricket club grounds. Pupils are also taken to facilities further afield for aspects of physical education (PE) such as swimming and games. Since the previous inspection, school hot lunches have been introduced. The school offers before-school supervision and after-school care.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils live within a twenty-mile radius and come mainly from professional and business families. Most join at three years old and are placed in the Nursery class. If spaces occur in other year groups, they are filled through individual, informal assessment. One hundred pupils are currently on roll, 47 boys and 53 girls. Pupils are grouped according to age into six classes.
- 1.5 A total of 36 children under five are accommodated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Across the school, ten pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom two receive specialist support from the school. None has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Twenty-seven pupils are from different ethnic origins with the majority being from Asian backgrounds. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The ability profile of the school is above that of the national average.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Plumtree School is successful in meeting its aims of ensuring that every pupil reaches their true potential and that they are well prepared for a world of lifelong learning. Pupils' academic achievement is excellent. From an early age in the EYFS, children achieve highly and this is built upon through to their point of transfer to their chosen secondary schools. Pupils also achieve highly in a wide range of creative subjects such as music, speech and drama, and art. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are keen, enthusiastic learners who always give of their best. Pupils of all ages benefit from good curricular provision which provides opportunities in a suitable range of subjects and activities. However, some extra-curricular activities are only available for certain year groups at a time on a rotational basis. The quality of teaching is excellent throughout the school. Teaching is well planned, delivered with pace and shows skilful questioning ensuring all pupils are challenged effectively, irrespective of their needs. Targets for learning are carefully set to assist pupils to make maximum progress, thus meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection. Excellent use is made of assistants to support the high quality of teaching.
- 2.2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. From the EYFS, pupils develop a deep spiritual awareness and a strong moral code. They understand right and wrong and openly debate ethical issues successfully. Their social development is excellent and this is demonstrated in their contributions to the life of the school and to the wider community. Pupils have a strong cultural awareness and their respect towards those whose backgrounds may differ from their own is excellent. Pupils throughout the school are well cared for. Excellent relationships exist between the staff and the pupils and among the pupils themselves. Parents and pupils speak highly of the level of care that the school provides. The welfare health and safety of the pupils, including in the EYFS, is generally of a high standard with excellent arrangements now in place for the safeguarding of pupils.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is good. The proprietors have an excellent insight to the working of the school and are very successful in evaluating success and in planning the way forward. School policies and procedures relating to health and safety are excellent. However, under past ownership, there had been insufficient oversight relating to the safer recruitment of staff. Good leadership and management is reflected in the school's inclusive approach to all matters. Detailed job descriptions for all senior leaders and clear educational direction, provided in the development plan, meet recommendations from the previous inspection. In the EYFS, regular discussions are held to discuss the work of the setting but these are not regularly formalised or recorded effectively. The role of subject co-ordinators has also been effectively developed with mechanisms used to monitor subject teaching and learning. This is better developed in some subjects than others, thus partly meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection. The school has successfully implemented an appraisal and monitoring procedure, as recommended at the previous inspection.

## **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 all appropriate checks, including separate barred list checks and risk assessments where needed, are carried out and then the evidence recorded [Part 4, paragraph 18(2)(a), under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7(a) under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Complete the development of the monitoring of teaching and learning, so that all subject co-ordinators are fully effective.
  2. Extend the range and availability of extra-curricular provision for all pupils.
  3. Establish, formalise and record regular meetings across the EYFS setting.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 In the EYFS, children of all abilities and needs, including those with SEND make excellent progress and achieve extremely well in relation to their individual starting points on entry to the setting. Children are highly articulate, have well-developed listening skills and can carefully follow instructions. Nursery children were seen following a story with keen interest and could predict what might happen next. Their recall of events in the story was excellent. They can recognise and count numbers up to 20 and sometimes beyond. Children in the Reception class can confidently count on from a given two-digit number. Children can also make up their own addition sums. They enjoy using games on the interactive whiteboard demonstrating excellent skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Children delight in exploring and thinking independently and creatively, such as making caterpillars and cocoons with malleable dough.
- 3.3 From Year 1, pupils achieve high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. They read confidently and expressively from an early age. High reading levels show a significant depth of understanding for their age, for example when discussing genres and others' perceptions of different styles. As pupils move through the school, they read and write with increasing fluency and for a wide variety of purposes such as persuasive and emotive texts. Much of this writing is of a high standard, showing clear evidence of creativity and critical thought. Pupils are extremely articulate and express themselves with confidence. Numeracy skills are of a high order and are applied well to investigation and problem-solving activities. Pupils manipulate and interrogate data with competence. In science, pupils are prepared to experiment for themselves and to test hypotheses.
- 3.4 Pupil achievement is enhanced by the opportunities provided to become independent learners and to use ICT, which is integrated successfully in most areas of the curriculum. Pupils are proficient in the use of a wide variety of programs. Pupils' creative skills are excellent as demonstrated in a variety of activities, such as the many music ensembles. Pupils display imagination in art, design and technology and drama, and achieve high standards in a range of sporting activities such as football and cricket in local and regional competitions. Pupils perform well in speech and drama and instrumental music examinations. Pupils are successful in gaining places at the schools of their choice, sometimes with scholarships and awards.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence, consisting of lesson observations, pupils' written work and curricular interviews with them, confirms this judgement. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make at least a good, and for many an excellent, rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.6 The attainment of pupils with SEND is excellent due to the time and attention that is given to their specific needs. Their progress is equally successful due to detailed planning and the provision of effective access to all curricular areas. The

achievement of more able pupils is strong particularly when careful planning focuses on their specific needs by providing challenging tasks and extension work.

- 3.7 The pupils' overall achievement is supported by their excellent attitudes to learning. They demonstrate an outstanding work ethic at all times. They clearly enjoy their education and always give of their best. Pupils are active, independent learners and their high level of participation and interest is worthy of note. Their learning skills are exemplary. Pupils work very well together, and effectively use opportunities for collaborative work in lessons. Their support of one another is second nature.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 In accordance with the school's aims, children are given experiences in an effective range of subjects and activities, which makes a strong contribution to their excellent progress. Children in the EYFS experience broad and balanced educational programmes including subjects such as music and cooking with an emphasis on developing their critical thinking skills through the many challenges presented to them. Excellent planning together with a highly dedicated and well qualified staff, enable children of all ages and abilities to develop and learn effectively, using a range of appropriate resources.
- 3.10 The curriculum is planned thoroughly and, together with the extra-curricular programme, actively promotes fundamental British values and provides a balanced presentation of opposing views in the coverage of political issues. It provides all the required aspects of learning and presents excellent opportunities through which pupils develop intellectual curiosity. Much of the curriculum is effectively delivered by the class teachers with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Specialist teacher input is successfully used in music, art and speech and drama in Years 3 to 6, and their expertise and enthusiasm has an impact on the engagement of the pupils. Some class teachers also teach other age groups in their specialist subjects to enhance the curriculum opportunities for all pupils. A comprehensive and effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme underpins the school curriculum and every opportunity is taken to integrate this into school life, whether this be through discrete lessons, circle time, assemblies or through other subjects such as science or PE.
- 3.11 Those pupils with SEND are identified early and the excellent level of additional support is provided through carefully planned lessons, some individual or group tuition and excellent teaching assistant support. The more able pupils are extended effectively in lessons through the high expectations of their teachers who provide suitably challenging work through extension activities.
- 3.12 The school offers a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. The range has recently been extended in consultation with the parents and pupils. It provides an excellent variety of musical activities such as different groups, choirs, and ensembles. Whilst the school offers a small but varied choice of other activities that encourage pupils' creativity and engage their general interest, some are currently only available for certain year groups at a time on a rotational basis. Through activities such as cookery, gardening, dance and gymnastics the pupils broaden their educational experiences. They appreciate the activities provided for them and the good attendance for each session demonstrates the value given to the extra-curricular life of the school.

- 3.13 A good programme of trips and visits is organised, which supports topics within the curriculum and enriches the pupils' learning. A residential excursion for the pupils in Year 6 makes a significant contribution to their personal development through fostering leadership skills, team spirit, personal and group awareness and respect for one another's capabilities. Day trips to more local venues relating to religious, historical or geographical areas of the curriculum further extend the learning opportunities offered to the pupils. The curriculum is also strengthened by visiting speakers and those who run specific activities such as the baking day. There are numerous themed days such as Brazil day and a Roman day which develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- 3.14 The curriculum is strengthened by strong links with the community and pupils take a full part in these initiatives. The school links with the community through sporting opportunities and through the use of local venues to enhance the curriculum. The school participates in music festivals which provide additional opportunities for the pupils. The school holds regular nature walks through the surrounding area and pupils use the church for special events such as Harvest and Christmas celebrations. The school plays an important part in the life of their community.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 In the EYFS, activities are carefully planned to match abilities and interests particularly for the more able, and excellent support is given to children with SEND. EYFS staff have high expectations of the children and next steps are identified through comprehensive observations, assessment and planning, including an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff are knowledgeable about the learning and development requirements of the children and this ensures that all are achieving highly, making excellent progress and are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- 3.17 From Year 1, high quality teaching successfully promotes the aim of the school to ensure that each child's first crucial schooling years are enjoyable, memorable and draw them into the world of life-long learning. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, regular and meaningful targets for learning are now fully implemented across the school, and make a strong contribution to pupils' achievements.
- 3.18 The teachers know their pupils extremely well and planning is based on a strong understanding of all the pupils' needs. Thorough planning takes account of pupils' previous learning and target-setting shows how progress can be best achieved. Encouraging and supportive marking in all subjects is suitably guided and in line with whole-school marking policies. The pupils understand the mark scheme and feel it helps them to improve. Constructive teacher assessments and formal assessments throughout the school successfully inform the next steps in learning and future target-setting. The pupils respond particularly well to the 'two stars and a wish' feedback in their books which celebrates achievement, suggests areas for improvement and promotes self-esteem among the pupils.
- 3.19 The best teaching draws particularly on strong subject knowledge and excellent use of resources. High quality, searching questioning by staff further improves the quality of teaching and develops pupils' independent thinking. ICT resources have been increased and interactive whiteboards and tablets are used effectively across

the school. This enables more interaction with the pupils and teaching is enhanced through these high quality resources. Teaching skilfully engages the pupils' interest appealing to a wide range of learning styles. Lessons are well managed. 'I can' statements or learning objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of lessons and time is given for application of knowledge, consolidation of learning and reflection. Teaching areas are well resourced, have vibrant displays of information and celebrate pupils' work, valuing their effort.

- 3.20 The majority of the teaching is engaging with good pace and content that challenges pupils of all abilities and encourages a willingness to learn and achieve. The needs of those with SEND and the more able are met well. Teaching is full of praise and encouragement and this is strongly supported by an excellent team of teaching assistants, who are involved in all aspects of school life and play an invaluable role in support for all pupils. They enable effective group work, support to individuals and support for the teacher. Teaching benefits from a thorough knowledge and understanding of pupils' abilities and personalities enabling all the pupils to be well focused and challenged. Teaching skilfully encourages pupils to understand and appreciate a balanced point of view in relation to political issues through debate and discussion. Tolerance and respect are reflected in all aspects of the teaching.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the school the pupils' personal qualities develop successfully in line with the school's aims. Pupils are self-confident, with moral understanding, good manners and self-discipline. This is developed through the opportunities the pupils have to take on responsibilities and to participate in a variety of public events.
- 4.3 Children in the EYFS share resources happily, organise themselves effectively and clearly understand what is expected of them. They readily co-operate with one another and develop a strong social awareness from an early age. They understand different cultures, such as Islam, and as a result learn to respect others and understand their differences. They are all well prepared for transition to their next class.
- 4.4 Older pupils' demonstrate strong spiritual awareness. Pupils are emotionally mature and are able to discuss issues that may well be above what is expected for their age. Pupils demonstrate a great sense of pride in all aspects of their school life and often celebrate this together in assemblies or during class time. Pupils' spiritual development is successfully promoted across the curriculum. They show a deep appreciation for all non-material aspects of life through their enjoyment and involvement in areas such as music and art. Inspectors witnessed a real sense of awe and wonder in 'show and tell' time. Pupils were enthralled to listen to all that their peers had to say, raising self-esteem and self-confidence. The pupils lead prayers at lunch time and during assemblies, enabling good moments of spiritual reflection.
- 4.5 Pupils' strong moral awareness is evident throughout the school, based on the pupils' excellent behaviour and their mature sense of right and wrong. Pupils are taught to make the right choices and this is promoted successfully through assemblies and circle time. A strong moral code permeates through the school and this is modelled by all the staff who lead by example. Rewards are given frequently and sanctions are rarely needed, due to the excellent standard of behaviour through the school. Pupils' moral awareness is further heightened through class debates around ethical issues. Pupils are aware of moral and ethical values and this is supported by positive parental engagement and support.
- 4.6 Pupils show excellent social awareness demonstrating responsibility and care to the society of the school and to the world beyond. The high quality of pupils' social development is shown through the many responsibilities taken on by monitors around the school. The school council elect specific charities during the year to help those less fortunate than themselves. This heightens the pupils' social understanding and further develops their respect for all other people, including the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 organise an enterprise scheme and the money raised goes to a chosen charity, deepening their social and economic understanding. Pupils understand the principles that underpin fundamental British values. During the time of the parliamentary election, pupils took part in voting for Britain's national bird where they listened to a range of viewpoints that deepened their understanding of democracy in action. The older pupils also take part in class debates. These all impact on the pupils' knowledge of public institutions and services, English laws and the way in

which democracy works, understanding that individuals can influence decision-making.

- 4.7 Pupils demonstrate a strong appreciation for their own cultural identity through their love of art and music and visits to museums, theatres and concerts. They show an excellent understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. Their cultural development is strengthened through the many opportunities that are given to celebrate other religions and cultures through the curriculum and in celebrating specific events such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. In one class pupils were given the choice in which language the register was taken. Pupils' excellent cultural awareness is further heightened through classroom displays which inform pupils about other faiths such as Buddhism, Sikhism and trips that are made to local places of worship. Harmonious relationships with those from different backgrounds underpin the pupils' cultural understanding.
- 4.8 On leaving the school, all pupils are fully prepared and ready for the transition to senior school. The pupils are self-aware and show a well-rounded personality for their age. They speak confidently and articulate their thoughts and ideas. Their success at school enhances their sense of self-esteem, while maintaining a strong sense of empathy towards others.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.10 All staff offer strong pastoral support through a genuine care for the pupils in line with the school aims. Class teachers provide the basis for the excellent pastoral care arrangements offering support and guidance throughout the school day. Pupils feel safe and secure.
- 4.11 In the EYFS, provision for the children's well-being is excellent. All children are extremely well known and supported by the caring and friendly staff ensuring close relationships are formed with their key persons. Children are all happy in their learning. They are all confident when talking to adults and their peers. During break times and lunchtimes, they behave well, feel safe and happily mix with pupils of all ages. Children develop independent hygiene routines and understand the need for physical exercise and healthy eating.
- 4.12 Throughout the school relationships are excellent between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves. At break times pupils are well supervised and strong pastoral concern is evident in all areas. They play together happily and show mutual respect and concern for one another. There is a feeling of a nurturing 'home from home' community. In pre-inspection questionnaires parents were unanimous in their view that their children are well looked after.
- 4.13 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through developing healthy eating habits and by taking regular exercise. A healthy lifestyle is part of the PSHEE and science programmes and the pupils have plenty of opportunities for exercise during the day. They are provided with healthy food at lunch and excellent staff supervision of their eating habits promotes the healthy eating programme.
- 4.14 Good behaviour is promoted throughout the school. The lack of the use of serious sanctions shows that pupils' behaviour is of the highest order. Scrutiny of documentation showed that sanctions are issued consistently according to the misdemeanour. The use of team points is effective and classroom displays guide

pupils on what is acceptable behaviour. The school has effective methods to guard against bullying and pupils say if there was a problem they would talk to a member of staff immediately knowing that their concern would be listened to and acted upon. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive that the school deals with any bullying incidences effectively.

- 4.15 A suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND and/or disabilities has been produced.
- 4.16 The school values the views of all pupils and has numerous systems to ensure that their opinions are heard. During interviews the pupils commented that they felt their opinions and ideas were listened to and actioned. Open dialogue is encouraged throughout the school. The school council is an effective mechanism for the pupil voice to be represented. Pupils are involved in selecting which after school clubs are offered and school council matters are prominently displayed for all to be included. A strong sense of community and sharing is part of the fabric of the school.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.18 In the EYFS, required policies are implemented and procedures now ensure all children are safe in a secure environment, with safeguarding given a high priority. Risk assessments are completed for all areas, including trips out of school. Staff are well qualified with an appropriate number of paediatric first aiders.
- 4.19 The whole school is successful in meeting its aims in relation to all matters of welfare, health and safety and the arrangements contribute effectively to the pupils' personal development. The safeguarding arrangements throughout the school have regard to official guidance including a strong policy which is implemented well. All staff are aware of their legal obligations to keep pupils safe and this is reflected in the thoroughness of their training and in the comprehensive systems that support pupils' welfare. Clear procedures to report any concerns on to the local authority are carried out. In the past insufficient care was given to the safer recruitment of staff. Current procedures are thorough and all checks are meticulously recorded.
- 4.20 The school has excellent systems to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Regular equipment checks, fire drills and risk assessments all ensure that potential dangers are minimised. All matters relating to the reduction of risks are carefully recorded. The school has a comprehensive risk assessment policy which is effectively implemented.
- 4.21 The health and safety of all members of the school community is given high importance. The site is regularly maintained and any potential issues identified are immediately rectified. The school has suitable arrangements for those pupils who are sick or for those who require first aid. Staff, appropriately trained in first aid, ensures that the needs of pupils are met well. The school's excellent arrangements ensure that the provision for any pupils with SEND is of the highest quality.
- 4.22 The school's admission and attendance registers are properly maintained, and correctly stored for the previous three years. Attendance registers are filled in carefully and any unexplained absences are followed up immediately.

## **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 proprietors are most effective in their oversight of all aspects of school life in accordance with its aims. They know the school well and they discharge their responsibilities for educational standards effectively. This is reflected in pupils' excellent academic achievement and in their high levels of personal development. The proprietors show excellent support for the EYFS setting, one of whom shares the teaching in Reception and subsequently has a good understanding of its needs, strengths and challenges.
- 5.3 The proprietors have a collegiate approach, making excellent use of senior leaders to ensure effective oversight of all matters. The proprietors ensure that they pay careful attention to financial planning and this is reflected in the high quality of staffing provision and in the resources available to support pupils' learning. They also ensure that the accommodation available is well maintained and that it is suitable for the needs of all pupils. The governance of the school is strengthened through the support of an external adviser who works closely with the proprietors on all educational matters.
- 5.4 The proprietors have an excellent insight into the working of the school. As some of them are key members of the leadership team, they have a deep understanding of the needs of all pupils. The proprietors are effective in their roles in providing suitable challenge and this is reflected in the school's plan for growth and development. The comprehensive plan focuses on the improvement of the provision for all pupils. The proprietors have strong systems for reviewing pupils' performance and monitoring their progress, as well as the performance of the staff, ensuring that governance is forward thinking whilst consolidating what it has already achieved in a relatively short period of time.
- 5.5 In discharging their responsibilities for statutory requirements, the proprietors are generally effective. Since taking ownership of the school, they have reviewed all policies and procedures demonstrating the importance they place in this area of school life. They ensure that the arrangements for the safeguarding and protection of pupils is of the highest quality. This includes the annual review of the safeguarding policy and child protection arrangements. However, in the past, insufficient rigour was shown in relation to the safe recruitment of staff.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.7 In the EYFS a good appraisal system has been developed and staff are encouraged to take part in professional development. Links with local authority training and outside agencies ensure support for children's learning when the need arises. A supervision policy for staff has recently been introduced successfully, facilitating a one-to-one opportunity for staff to discuss any issues with the head of the setting. The staff team regularly discuss individual children and their needs and interests, to

inform their next steps in learning and targets for improvement. However, this is only recorded informally and meetings across the setting are not yet regular or formalised. The leadership and management are very successful in evaluating practice and provision, resulting in a shared vision for future plans and a strong base for continued development. This is reflected in the whole school development plan which has been strengthened since the previous inspection.

- 5.8 Throughout the school, leadership and management are effective at all levels, in line with the school's aims and its ethos which actively promotes British values, including those of encouraging respect for others. All staff are fully qualified in, and school leaders have effective oversight of, all matters relating to pupil welfare and safeguarding. School leaders and managers have very clear mechanisms to ensure that all policies are kept up-to-date and are implemented effectively. Detailed job descriptions are now written for all senior leaders including the acting head which outline responsibilities clearly, thus meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection. The role of subject leaders has been effectively enhanced. However, these are not fully developed in all subjects to provide effective monitoring of teaching and learning, thus only partly meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 5.9 Despite recent changes in the proprietorial and leadership structure, the school has not lost any impetus or direction. There are many new initiatives which have recently been successfully introduced. The leadership and management are forward thinking and always striving to improve. The school's development plan is thorough and comprehensive and demonstrates a desire to push things forward to ensure that pupils' academic achievement and personal development are of the highest order. The development plan provides a firmer framework for the school and fully meets a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 5.10 Continuous self-evaluation is a strength of the leadership of the school. Leaders value the evaluation of initiatives from everyone involved in the school and then respond accordingly. As the school has changed, the leaders have responded to the ever-changing climate and set new goals, evaluated them and then determined new priorities.
- 5.11 The school is most successful in securing, developing, supporting, and motivating high quality staff. There is a strong sense of mutual respect and teamwork which is championed by the school's senior leaders. Staff speak openly about how they feel valued and how much they appreciate the opportunities they have to be part in shaping the school's future. The school leaders and managers ensure that all staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and in all matters relating to welfare, health and safety. Regular appraisal of staff is carried out and from this opportunities for professional development are identified. This meets a recommendation from the previous inspection to implement the new appraisal and monitoring procedures. There is a comprehensive system for the induction of staff which pays close attention to all matters relating to pupil safeguarding as well as ensuring all new staff understand all school policies and procedures. Recruitment procedures are now strong and several key leaders have undergone safer recruitment training. Current checks are meticulously undertaken and recorded effectively. However, in the past the leadership and management of the school has not had effective oversight of matters relating to staff recruitment; where the DBS disclosure was received after the member of staff began work at the school, there was no evidence that a separate barred list check was made or that a risk assessment was undertaken.

- 5.12 Links with parents are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents felt strongly that the school was well-led and managed and they indicated their support for the school leaders and managers and their continued commitment to the children's well-being through recent uncertain times with changes in ownership.
- 5.13 In the EYFS, links with parents are excellent. Following a home visit prior to entry, staff help children to settle well, and parents are kept fully informed through daily contact, email, a home-school reading diary, a weekly newsletter and parents' notice boards. Informative and carefully kept folders of all aspects of work and assessments, including targets, are shared with parents. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in conversation with inspectors, parents of pupils in the EYFS are overwhelmingly satisfied with all aspects of provision. In particular they value the progress their child makes in school, and the fact that their children feel happy, safe and secure.
- 5.14 Throughout the school, the welcome pack, including the school handbook, provides high quality information to parents. Parents also receive a weekly newsletter, the *What's On*, and appreciate the termly overview of future topics. Parents of both current and prospective pupils know that the required regulatory information, including the complaints policy and safeguarding procedures, are all available on the school's website.
- 5.15 The school maintains constructive relationships with parents, handling any rare concerns sensitively and confidentially. Parents speak highly of the family atmosphere in the school and value the fact that all staff, including the proprietors, know their children extremely well. The open-door policy means parents feel very welcome in school at all times. Informal contact can be at drop-off and collection times, by email, telephone or by the daily reading record diary. More formal contact is through parents' evenings, when their child's progress is discussed, and an open evening where parents meet the next teacher. Throughout the school, parents receive high quality, detailed and informative school reports twice each year.
- 5.16 Parents have many opportunities to be involved with the life of the school, attending events such as summer concerts, plays and sports day. There is a strong parents association, which regularly holds social and fund-raising events for school and charities. They also support other events such as providing strawberries and cream at sports day and hot chocolate during the sponsored winter walk. The parents committee hold regular open meetings and welcome all parents to attend to contribute ideas and give support.

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