



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**HILL HOUSE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hill House School

|                           |                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full Name of School       | <b>Hill House School</b>                                                                          |
| DfE Number                | <b>371/6000</b>                                                                                   |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>529420</b>                                                                                     |
| Address                   | <b>Hill House School<br/>6th Avenue<br/>Auckley<br/>Doncaster<br/>South Yorkshire<br/>DN9 3GG</b> |
| Telephone Number          | <b>01302 776300</b>                                                                               |
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| Head                      | <b>Mr David Holland</b>                                                                           |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>Mrs Elizabeth Paver</b>                                                                        |
| Age Range                 | <b>3 to 18</b>                                                                                    |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>724</b>                                                                                        |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Mixed (393 boys; 331 girls)</b>                                                                |
| Numbers by Age            | <b>3-5 (EYFS): 67    5-11: 266<br/>11-18: 391</b>                                                 |
| Head of EYFS Setting      | <b>Mrs Janine Guest</b>                                                                           |
| EYFS Gender               | <b>Boys and Girls</b>                                                                             |
| Inspection Dates          | <b>17 Nov 2015 to 20 Nov 2015</b>                                                                 |

## PREFACE

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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI second cycle inspection was in November 2009.

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 children aged under two), 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, with the chair of governors and another governor, 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 records and regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

|                    |                                                       |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Mrs Honoree Gordon | Reporting Inspector                                   |
| Mr Clive Bulmer    | Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)              |
| Mr Andrew Colpus   | Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)               |
| Mrs Joanna Pardon  | Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)            |
| Mr Jay Piggot      | Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)               |
| Mr Andrew Selkirk  | Team inspector (Deputy Head, Society of Heads school) |
| Mrs Kia Jackson    | Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years               |

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

- 1.1 Hill House School aims to provide high quality independent education in a supportive, congenial and family-based community, helping to develop the academic and other talents of each pupil. It seeks to educate the whole person, within a framework of encouraging and disciplined pastoral care. The school strives to ensure that the pursuit of excellence is central to every aspect of its work, enabling pupils to be confident, capable, considerate and compassionate people, with independent minds and a proper sense of service and responsibility.
- 1.2 The school is a co-educational day school for pupils from the ages of 3 to 18, comprising a Nursery, Junior School and Senior School. It was established in 1912. In 2002 it merged with St Mary's School, which had opened in 1959, to become Hill House St Mary's School. In 2008, the school moved to its present site at Auckley, five miles south of Doncaster, and returned to the name Hill House School. The school has charitable status and is administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, facilities have been extended through the provision of additional new buildings, facilities and sports grounds. In 2011 the school extended its age range for admissions from 16 to 18. At the time of the inspection, the school had 724 pupils on roll, 67 of whom were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There were 266 pupils in Years 1 to 6, 305 pupils in Years 7 to 11, and 86 pupils in Years 12 and 13.
- 1.3 The pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and ethnic origins. Their parents are predominantly professional or self-employed. Many pupils live within or close to Doncaster, but others travel in from Rotherham, Worksop and Scunthorpe. Most pupils in Year 7 come from the Junior School, but there are some external entrants from maintained primary schools. Thirty-seven pupils require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' needs are mainly support for specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia. None has an education, health and care plan and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. One pupil requires support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 Children's EYFS profiles serve as a baseline for measuring their level of ability on entry to Year 1. These are mostly above national expectations. The ability profile of the Senior School is above the national average. The ability profile of Years 12 and 13 is slightly above the national average for pupils in sixth-form education.
- 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 Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. In the EYFS, most pupils reach the levels of development expected for their age; some exceed them. In the Junior School, attainment and progress are good. Literacy and numeracy develop well. Attainment at GCSE is above the national average; pupils' progress is good. At A level, attainment is similar to the national average for maintained schools and that for maintained selective schools. At all levels, pupils with SEND or EAL or who are able make good progress, although in a few lessons, the needs of the able pupils are not always taken into account sufficiently well. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. The curriculum and the contribution made by extra-curricular activities to pupils' achievement are excellent. The Junior School curriculum is diverse, including subject such as French, German, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. In the Senior School, the new course in philosophy, politics and ethics (PPE) is proving popular, expanding the pupils' understanding of the wider world. Extra-curricular activities, especially sport, music, art and drama, feature prominently in pupils' individual and overall successes, and are cited by parents as a key strength of the school. Teaching is good. That in the EYFS enables children of all abilities to achieve well through the good use of assessment and detailed planning. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching further work well, but are not co-ordinated across the school to ensure that the existing best practice is disseminated throughout.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent, including the part played by their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are cheerful and unfailingly courteous. The school provides an excellent standard of pastoral care, underpinned by excellent arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety. Due regard is paid to the safeguarding of pupils; all requirements are met. The checks on staff upon appointment are rigorous and are recorded correctly.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent throughout the school and have ensured that it meets its statutory responsibilities. The recommendations from the previous inspection have all been accomplished. New facilities, such as a music school and an artificial pitch, have enhanced the curriculum significantly. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents showed overwhelming support for the school, praising all aspects of its work. They value highly the family atmosphere in the school; they feel that their children are happy and benefit from a very wide range of activities and opportunities.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Establish a cohesive approach across the school to develop the quality of teaching further, including disseminating the best practice within the school.

### **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 good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. The achievement of children in the EYFS is excellent. They make rapid progress in relation to their starting points so that they are attaining above national expectations by the time they move up to Year 1. They understand, for example, what adjectives are and can put them in a sentence, also using a capital letter and a full stop. They are articulate and confident. Children make a good start in reading and can begin to write phonically logical words. They know the names of three-dimensional shapes. The children thoroughly enjoy their learning and are highly active learners. They relish exploring the variety of environments inside and out, including within the new covered area. They are keen to try new experiences, such as tasting new exotic fruits. Children concentrate well and work co-operatively. They relish being creative and enjoy working independently, for example when serving in their pretend pizza parlour. Children with SEND or EAL make excellent progress, in line with their peers, because of the high quality support and care they receive from the teachers and assistants.
- 3.3 Older pupils reach good levels of skills in literacy and numeracy. These skills are developed steadily through the wide range of subjects and opportunities offered by the excellent curriculum. Creative skills in art are a particular strength: pupils have won a number of awards regionally and nationally. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are good. In some lessons, pupils apply these skills routinely as part of their work to enhance their learning, though the range of opportunities teachers provide varies markedly across subjects.
- 3.4 Achievement in sport, games and music is high and makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The development of pupils' skills in sports, particularly hockey and rugby, is viewed as a key part of the school's curriculum. There have recently been greater opportunities for all pupils to take part in teams and more intensive coaching. In athletics, hockey, rugby and netball, boys' and girls' teams achieve success at regional and national levels, frequently reaching finals. For example, the under-11 girls' hockey team was placed third in North of England championships and the boys' under-15 rugby team reached the last 16 of a national competition. There are many examples of success for individual pupils in a range of other sports, including gymnastics, swimming and horse riding. Boys have been selected for the Yorkshire rugby team and play for professional football academies. Interest in sport is fostered well: individual pupils currently represent the UK or England in ice skating, sailing, skiing and football.
- 3.5 Pupils are successful in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a recently formed air cadet section. A large number of pupils participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. In 2014, pupils achieved 16 gold and 26 silver awards. Pupils take part in many music groups, such as choirs, an orchestra, jazz groups and drum workshops. Considerable numbers of pupils have passed instrumental music examinations, the vast majority at merit or distinction levels, including grades VI and VII. Pupils have been members of the Rainbow Connection choirs, a joint youth and adult choir school, which won the BBC Open Choir of the Year 2015 national competition, and the jazz orchestra reached the national finals at the Royal

Northern College of Music. Pupils across the school stage school plays three times a year.

- 3.6 In the Junior School, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good. They make good progress. Pupils follow an excellent curriculum and almost all transfer into the Senior School for their secondary education. Regular access to ICT resources helps pupils to make good progress in applying their ICT skills effectively across subjects, preparing them well for senior school.
- 3.7 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Pupils' performance at GCSE has been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and in 2014 results were similar to the national average for maintained selective schools, having improved over the period. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. This was confirmed in lesson observations, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, as well as the school's analyses, and reflects the good teaching they receive. At A level, results are similar to the national average for maintained schools and that for maintained selective schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make appropriate progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability.
- 3.8 Pupils who have SEND and those with EAL make good progress throughout the school. Supportive staff are helping to remove any barriers to learning these pupils experience. Almost all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they believe they are making good progress in their studies. Able, gifted or talented pupils benefit from additional encouragement to succeed, in the form of extension tasks in lessons. They also have good opportunities to develop their talents in creative subjects. In many lessons, teachers successfully challenge these pupils to show initiative and independence.
- 3.9 Pupils' attitudes to learning across the school are very good. They respond well to the school's efforts to develop their talents and are keen to succeed. They organise their work efficiently, and clearly enjoy being at the school. They make the most of the excellent opportunities provided by the school's supportive community. Pupils co-operate with one another very well, fostered highly effectively through the plentiful opportunities to be part of teams in sport, music and competitions. By the time they leave pupils have developed good skills at working independently, as this is promoted from the start.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 The school meets its aim of helping to develop the academic and other talents of each pupil, enabling school leavers to be confident, capable and compassionate people. Throughout the school, the curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and meets the needs of all pupils effectively, including those who have SEND or EAL. The curriculum is supported by appropriately detailed schemes of work that actively promote British values such as democracy, the rule of law and individual freedom. The balance of subjects across the week has improved since the previous inspection to better meet the needs and interests of the pupils. The curriculum has evolved well to meet demands as the school has expanded.

- 3.12 The educational programmes in the EYFS help almost all children to reach the expected levels of development; many children exceed them. Those few children who have not yet reached the expected levels receive extra support in order to make good progress when they transfer to the next stage of their learning. The curriculum is delivered creatively and imaginatively in all areas, and is enhanced by specialist teaching in music, ICT, physical education and dance.
- 3.13 The excellent Junior School curriculum includes the study of four modern foreign languages: French, German, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. Practical subjects have a strong place in the curriculum. Resources are plentiful, including specialist computing and science facilities. Pupils take part in the UK Maths Challenge.
- 3.14 Senior School pupils in Years 7 to 9 study a broad range of subjects. The course in PPE has been introduced and is proving popular. This subject provides pupils with an excellent opportunity to discuss a wide range of contemporary topics, such as war in the Middle East. The comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) informs pupils about the wider world and helps to prepare them for adult life in Britain. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 benefit from regular careers lessons provided by a specialist. The range of modern foreign languages has been extended, with the introduction of Spanish into Year 7 and German into the Year 9 options. In addition, pupils study Latin. Pupils choose from a broad range of options at GCSE. Pupils who are gifted at mathematics sit examinations early and take additional qualifications. In Years 12 and 13, pupils are offered a wide range of academic subjects, preparing them for moving on to higher education and the world of work. The school checks that there is a balanced presentation of opposing views when political issues are being considered. A varied enrichment programme includes visiting speakers, internships, visits to university and the Extended Project Qualification.
- 3.15 The excellent extra-curricular programme comprises over 120 clubs and activities covering sports, music, drama, academic areas, and hobbies and interests, such as cookery club, the Ancient Greek society, and the app design and pivot animation club. Levels of participation are high. Almost all pupils and parents representing all year groups who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires described the extra-curricular programme as a true strength of the school. The new artificial surface hockey pitch, together with the purchase of further sports pitches, has enabled the school to develop high quality sporting opportunities rapidly. Extra-curricular activities provide older pupils with good leadership opportunities and are an excellent means of bringing together pupils from the Junior School and Senior School, for example in the production of *Peter Pan*, involving pupils from Year 2 to Year 9.
- 3.16 Pupils interact with wider society through a variety of links with the local, national and international community. Pupils compete in the Robin Hood Music and Drama Festival, which the school hosts, winning categories in 2014 and 2015, and benefit from links with a local rugby club. The school hosts debating competitions against other schools. The newly formed air cadets section, open to children both from within and beyond the school, is attracting much interest. World Challenge trips develop pupils' global outlook further. The charities committee oversees a good number of events across the school to raise funds for various good causes. The school sponsors five pupils at a primary school in South Africa, and has raised funds for their playground project. These ventures foster pupils' personal development effectively.

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

- 3.17 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.18 All pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they believe their teachers help them to learn, and that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and work independently.
- 3.19 Children in the EYFS thoroughly enjoy their learning. They make rapid progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Those with SEND or EAL are supported to achieve well. The classrooms and outdoor areas of the EYFS setting are stimulating and very well resourced. These resources are used imaginatively to encourage the children's creativity and learning. Enthusiastic and creative staff work exceedingly well together to motivate the children to be ambitious learners. Staff plan activities that use a wide variety of high quality, stimulating resources to engage the children fully in their learning. Thorough assessment and planning make sure that staff cover all aspects of the EYFS curriculum. Teachers are clear about the next steps for each child, fulfilling the recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.20 In the Junior School, lesson planning is almost always good: teachers provide helpful support to pupils, especially during practical activities. This is particularly effective for those pupils who have SEND. The new facilities provide teaching spaces highly conducive to good learning and enjoyment, significantly enhancing the opportunities for pupils to engage in music, drama and sport, activities that help them to achieve in many different ways. At times, Junior School teaching enables pupils to become animated, enthused and able to use their oral skills confidently to reflect their knowledge and learning. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teaching brought to life a lesson testing knowledge of multiplication tables in ways that were fun, encouraging the pupils to go beyond what was expected of them and boosting their individual progress. These approaches allow pupils to make rapid progress and increase their enjoyment. In a very small minority of lessons seen, the progress of some pupils, including those of high ability, was restricted because tasks and activities were not always sufficiently adjusted to meet the full range of pupils' abilities in the class.
- 3.21 Teachers in the Senior School focus very effectively on examination requirements and techniques, which pupils enjoy and appreciate. Teachers throughout the school draw on a variety of resources to good effect, including ICT, well-prepared games, competitive sorting exercises and thought-provoking worksheets. Most teaching at this level features challenging, well-paced activities to stimulate pupils' curiosity. The well-stocked school library, newly built since the previous inspection, is used effectively to support independent learning and to promote reading for pleasure. Teachers draw on strong subject knowledge and excellent relationships with pupils to explain difficult concepts, ask stimulating questions, and respond to pupils' challenging questions and opinions. They use class discussion well to draw out ideas, to build confidence and to enable pupils to appreciate the wider context of their subject knowledge, within a classroom atmosphere of respect and tolerance, in accordance with the school's aims. In some of the best lessons, teachers confidently depart from their plans in order to respond to pupils' questions or comments, reinforcing the strong rapport between teachers and pupils. In these lessons the teachers' energy encourages pupils to sustain concentration. They very often allow pupils to take the initiative for their own learning by leading discussions, making presentations and learning from each other, for example in group tasks.

- 3.22 In the Senior School, pupils' progress is closely tracked and the data used effectively to determine strategies to boost their performance further. The school has recognised that the academic tracking system provides a good overview of pupils' progress, but is less informative when targeting the progress of individual pupils in the Junior School and identifying where there may be under-achievement. The responsibilities of newly appointed middle managers in the Junior School do not directly include this role.

## **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 Children in the EYFS make a positive contribution to their class and develop life skills for the future. They are exceedingly helpful to visitors. They co-operate well, happily sharing toys and materials. They treat each other with respect and appreciate one another's work. The children are tolerant of differences and make good choices in the classroom and playground. They learn about Britain's cultural diversity through religious festivals such as Diwali, Eid and Christmas. They are aware of living in England and its location in the world. Children are very well prepared for moving on to their next class because they know all the teachers well and mix with older pupils in the dining room and playground.
- 4.3 At all levels of the school, the pupils' personal development is promoted actively, as are the values that characterise Britishness. Their personal development is fostered in the EYFS and developed more overtly in the Junior School and Senior School as they mature. Junior School pupils are relaxed and self-aware. They place a high value on friendship and a happy community. A wide programme of educational visits and, from Year 4, residential trips, broadens pupils' awareness of life outside school, promoting their independence and developing skills at getting on with others. In line with the school's aims, pupils are confident, capable, considerate and compassionate, with a proper sense of service and responsibility.
- 4.4 Moral development is strongly evident, not only in pupils' courtesy towards visitors and each other, but also in co-operation and respect for the opinions of others. Pupils have a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong, and a desire to play fairly. They embrace kindness and tolerance, as exemplified in their supportive relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils show respect for all and identify issues of injustice and discrimination, which they oppose. In the Senior School, the pupils demonstrate a deep level of ethical awareness. The PPE course contributes to this. For example, a Year 8 class applied the principles of Bentham's Utilitarianism philosophy to homeless people well. A Year 7 form showed a good understanding of issues related to recent terrorist attacks, confidently sharing their views and drawing parallels between democracy in different countries, liberty and the rule of law. Pupils have a good understanding of how the law of England is made and implemented. House assemblies, current affairs discussions in form time and PSHE lessons further deepen pupils' understanding.
- 4.5 At all levels, social development is excellent. In the Junior School, staff provide strong role models and pupils rise to the challenges of leadership. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example as form captains or representatives in the younger years, as senior pupils mentoring younger pupils, and as head girl or boy in Years 12 and 13. Senior pupils have very good awareness of their local and school communities, and of the wider world, because of the many opportunities to be involved in programmes further afield, such as in Vietnam and Laos, and in Botswana. Pupils develop a mature capability of reflecting on differences in the human condition, demonstrating this when presented with examples of those less fortunate than themselves. Their empathy is demonstrated by the large numbers throughout the school who are involved regularly in raising funds for local and national good causes, chosen by houses and the charities committee.

- 4.6 Pupils' cultural understanding is excellent, extended by many trips abroad, including study visits to France, Germany and China. Their understanding of cultural diversity is also promoted through talks by parents of other faiths, and these visits add to their growing empathy and tolerance of the views and beliefs of others. Pupils respond with respect when discussing different faiths and belief systems. Work in art, drama and music exemplifies an excellent appreciation of Western cultural traditions. The many displays of pupils' work testify to the school's efforts to broaden pupils' understanding of other cultures.
- 4.7 Pupils develop a good understanding of the principal public services of England. A mock general election, involving pupils of all ages, promoted understanding of and encouraged future participation in the democratic process, for some pupils consolidating their understanding from a trip to the Houses of Parliament. Pupils gain first-hand experience of their community through talks from the fire service, police and health workers, further promoting their knowledge of English services and institutions.
- 4.8 By the time they leave the school, pupils are mature, quietly confident and deeply appreciative of the many opportunities the school has afforded them, and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives in modern Britain.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The school gives the pastoral well-being of the pupils a high priority within school life, and the care shown to pupils makes a strong contribution to their personal development. The pastoral staff and the policies and procedures they follow reflect closely the aim of providing encouraging and disciplined pastoral care, tailored to the needs of particular pupils. Staff provide very effective support and guidance, and relationships between the pupils and staff are highly positive. In their responses to the questionnaires, almost all pupils expressed how much they like being at the school, and almost all parents stated that their children are happy and are well looked after.
- 4.11 As a result of excellent pastoral care, children in the EYFS have the confidence to feel safe and valued as individuals. In turn, they form excellent relationships with their peers. Each child has a key person who carefully monitors his or her development, interests and abilities. The children think about what contributes to a healthy lifestyle and can identify nutritious vegetables. They are aware of the negative effects of sweet foods. The children like to be active and understand the related benefits.
- 4.12 In the Junior School, pupils feel that they are always listened to by "kind and caring" teachers. Pupils are aware of the significance of British values and can give examples of when these have been promoted. Junior assemblies discuss relevant topics, such as the prevention of bullying or global issues. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in sessions with the NSPCC and the police, and through PSHEE lessons on safely using the internet.
- 4.13 In the Senior School, pupils are allocated to one of three houses, normally remaining in the same house throughout, but changing form tutor each year. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 value the individual advice and consultations with their form tutors about university applications.

- 4.14 The school actively encourages healthy eating and living. School lunches are well balanced, nutritious and of good variety. A strong culture of sport and exercise encourages high pupil participation, with A to D teams in some years. Consequently, ample exercise is the norm for the great majority of pupils.
- 4.15 The school has effective procedures to promote good behaviour and to combat bullying. In their questionnaire responses, pupils said that bullying is not a concern and that staff deal with the rare acts of unkindness. The school's records show that the school takes prompt and effective action should any allegations of bullying occur. Pupils confirmed this view in discussions. They mentioned the efforts the school makes to guide them concerning the risks of cyber-bullying. Behaviour and consideration for others are excellent. A small minority of pupils in response to the questionnaire said that the school's systems for rewards do not always operate fairly. Inspectors looked at the school's policy for this and its records and logs, and asked about this in interviews with groups of pupils chosen at random. Inspectors also observed how the system operates in lessons and around school. They found that the pastoral systems encourage good behaviour very effectively, with no obvious unfairness. Pupils confirmed this in discussion, and several commented that the system has a motivating effect. Academic effort and good behaviour are rewarded through the house points system, with incentives in the form of vouchers as prizes. A suitable system of sanctions helps to deter any poor behaviour.
- 4.16 The school has extensive and effective systems to seek the views of pupils, such as the school council, food committee and regular school-based questionnaires. Pupils in all sections of the school also have a box where they can post questions or comments anonymously. Changes have come about because of matters raised by the pupil body, such as additional water coolers, a hockey pitch, trips overseas and curriculum development. Pupils feel involved and listened to.
- 4.17 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**

- 4.18 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.19 The school places high priority on pupils' welfare, health and safety. All the required policies are in place to underpin this. Safeguarding arrangements have close regard to the latest official guidance and make a strong contribution to pupils' excellent personal development throughout the school, including in the EYFS. Staff are trained at suitable levels in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. All required checks are carried out and recorded when appointing staff.
- 4.20 Child protection training is up to date for all staff, including those in the EYFS. Staff with managerial responsibility for safeguarding show a very good understanding of their role. The school's logs and discussion with these senior staff confirm that the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding are implemented effectively. When it proves necessary, timely contact is made with outside agencies and these links operate efficiently. Through the personal and social programmes, and by other means, suitable arrangements are made to help prevent radicalisation and extremism, including training for staff.
- 4.21 All necessary measures are taken for the prevention of fire and other hazards. There are suitable arrangements for pupils who fall ill and for first aid, including provision for children in the EYFS and those pupils who have SEND. The school

maintains attendance and admission registers correctly. Registers are kept electronically and prompt attendance is closely monitored.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors discharge their duties and responsibilities, including safeguarding the pupils and promoting their welfare, highly effectively. The governing body has a range of highly relevant expertise, including in the field of education. Governors are involved, challenging and supportive in equal measure, understanding their governance role. Together with the senior leadership, governors set a clear vision for the school, identify suitable priorities and closely monitor how successfully the school meets its aims. Governance in the EYFS is highly effective. Governors are fully supportive of the setting. They have overseen the development of the all-weather outdoor area since the previous inspection.
- 5.3 The governing body has ensured that the school meets statutory requirements. It has conducted the annual review of safeguarding, as required. Appropriate procedures are followed for the appointment of staff. Governors have readily assumed the first steps in their new duties within the Government strategy to protect pupils from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. The school's ethos is highly conducive to the promotion of respect for others and for British values.
- 5.4 Governors acted swiftly on the recommendations of the previous inspection: academic and pastoral systems are now well established, and the role of middle leaders in overseeing their subject areas has been strengthened. The balance of curriculum subjects has been improved. Through the appointments of extra staff and the creation of additional leadership posts, governors have astutely driven forward the school's growth.
- 5.5 The governing body has an excellent awareness of the school's strengths and areas for further development. This is reflected in the significant investment in new buildings and facilities, considerably extending the range of opportunities for pupils and promoting their achievement. Governors are keen to set the strategic direction for the future to promote excellence in all aspects of the school's work, consolidating recent successes and ensuring that the school continues to grow.

### **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 excellent.
- 5.7 The school's leaders fulfil their duty to promote pupils' welfare and take all necessary steps to safeguard their well-being. A good team of non-teaching staff works highly effectively with the school's leaders to ensure that policies are kept up to date, that procedures are followed and that staff training is provided, including for welfare, health and safety, and for safeguarding. Recruitment practices are excellent. Staff training in safeguarding is up to date.
- 5.8 Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in furthering the school's aims. The leadership's vision of excellence is clearly articulated, understood and

shared by the staff. Staff and governors are united behind the senior leadership in driving the school forward.

- 5.9 The EYFS staff receive appropriate professional supervision from senior managers, and any staff development needs are identified. Professional development up to and including university level supports this further. All EYFS staff have received and understand fully the most up-to-date child protection training. All hold paediatric first-aid certificates and most hold food hygiene certificates. The setting has made good progress since the previous inspection, fulfilling the two recommendations made at that time. Self-evaluation is strong. The staff have a clear, shared vision and have established appropriate priorities for developing the EYFS further.
- 5.10 The skills of middle managers have been successfully developed since the previous inspection. They have taken on additional responsibility and are more accountable for the success of their subject or area of work than previously. Management structures have grown very effectively to match the rapid expansion of the school. The creation of a good number of new leadership and management posts, and the appointment of specialist staff to additional posts, have strengthened leadership capacity further. Middle managers play a full and active part in the setting of school development plans and priorities, alongside senior leaders. New staff have also brought fresh ideas.
- 5.11 Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the monitoring of academic structures significantly. Through the scrutiny of samples of work, a rolling programme of observations and departmental reviews, the school's senior leaders have intervened successfully, setting highly focused targets, to boost subject departments identified as needing support. The school's leaders are aware that the quality of teaching across the school, whilst it is good overall and continues to improve, remains inconsistent. It has yet to identify and share more widely the excellent practice already established across a good number of subjects.
- 5.12 In all sections of the school, parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the education and support provided for their children. This is a strong indicator of satisfaction, given all the changes in the school since the previous inspection: the expansion of the school in age range to include Years 12 and 13, extensive building work, new staff and development of curriculum opportunities. That the school has operated so smoothly throughout is testament to the high quality of leadership and management.
- 5.13 Parents feel that the school communicates well with them. All required information is provided. This positive relationship is maintained through a regular newsletter, the school website and a range of social media. Parents welcome the message system used to inform them about collection times for match fixtures and school outings.
- 5.14 Relationships with parents are excellent, with contact immediate and personal, senior staff greeting them at the school gate, for example. The school keeps a log of any concerns raised by parents and deals satisfactorily with complaints. The procedure for managing complaints follows the school's policy. Records show that any complaints are responded to promptly and that careful records are kept.
- 5.15 Parents have excellent opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children, through parents' evenings, held termly in the Junior School and twice a year in the Senior School. Curriculum meetings are held to discuss option choices. Parents may also attend the parents' forum, where each year group is represented.

- 5.16 School reports give a comprehensive picture of each pupil's work and achievements. These are supplemented by grade sheets issued every three weeks and by end-of-term comment sheets. Parents also receive termly music reports.

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