



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ARGYLE HOUSE SCHOOL**

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Argyle House School

Full Name of School	Argyle House School		
DfE Number	394/6003		
Address	Argyle House School 19-20 Thornhill Park Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR2 7LA		
Telephone Number	0191 5100726		
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Email Address	info@argylehouseschool.co.uk		
Head	Mr Christopher Johnson		
Proprietor	Mr Christopher Johnson		
Age Range	2 to 16		
Total Number of Pupils	192		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (112 boys; 80 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0	5-11: 80	
	3-5 (EYFS): 26	11-18: 86	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	191	
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	03 Feb 2015 to 06 Feb 2015		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, 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 Bill Burn

Mrs Louise Robinson

Mr Stephen McKernan

Mrs Ann Richards

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Argyle House School seeks to create a safe and caring environment where children can have fun, work hard, and develop into strong, successful individuals. It aims to retain the advantages of a small school, with small class sizes. It attaches importance to the quality of relationships and communication. It also aims to offer a curriculum and a range of activities such as might be expected in a larger school. In this way it aims to enable all pupils to grow academically, socially, emotionally and physically by making them reflective, responsible, resourceful, resilient and reasoning.
- 1.2 The current proprietor, who is also the head, bought the school in 2008 from his father, who remained as the sole governor until his death in 2013. The school has no formal structure of governance but aims to appoint two governors in the near future to provide advice to the proprietor.
- 1.3 The school is located in Ashbrooke, a suburb close to the centre of the city of Sunderland. It was founded in 1884 by Mr Hanna, and remained in the Hanna family until 1969, when it was sold to the current proprietor's father. It was originally located at Argyle Square, from which it got its name, and subsequently moved to Thornhill Park.
- 1.4 The school, founded as a boys' school, has been co-educational since 1994, and admits pupils aged three to sixteen years. There were at the time of the inspection 192 pupils in the school, of whom 26 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 80 in the junior school, and 86 in the senior school. The school is not academically selective, and admits pupils from the city of Sunderland and the surrounding area. A small number of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the pupils is broadly comparable to the national average. The great majority of leavers go on to sixth-form courses at local colleges and elsewhere, and a few into the world of work, chiefly through apprenticeships.
- 1.6 The school has identified fourteen pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and gives specialist learning support to a total of forty-two pupils. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.7 Since the previous inspection, there has been significant investment in the buildings, with, for example, improvements to the outdoor facilities, dining room, ICT provision, and security arrangements.

- 1.8 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Junior School

School	NC name
P1	Year 1
P2	Year 2
P3	Year 3
P4	Year 4
P5	Year 5
P6	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
S1	Year 7
S2	Year 8
S3	Year 9
S4	Year 10
S5	Year 11

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils' achievements and attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills, both in the excellent curriculum, which is flexible and appropriate for all pupils in the school, and in extra-curricular activities. The pupils' academic achievement is above the average for maintained primary schools in the junior school, and above the average for maintained secondary schools at GCSE. The school analyses carefully the needs of pupils with SEND, offers them individual specialist learning support, and ensures that appropriate strategies are used in mainstream teaching to ensure that their needs are met. The pupils are willing learners, prepared to engage in class and work hard. They are also ambitious and self-aware, and collaborate in groups and pairs especially well. They know what they need to do to improve. They take full advantage of the excellent relationships they enjoy with their teachers and with one another. The excellent programme of extra-curricular activities offers an expanding range of opportunities. Pupils enjoy and value them, using them to excellent advantage. Excellent teaching demonstrates thorough subject knowledge, skill in organisation, time management and use of resources, as well as a thorough knowledge of each pupil's needs. Teaching does not yet use ICT to full advantage.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school. They benefit from the school's ethos and culture as well as from formal instruction. They develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, and by the time they leave the school they are mature, articulate and unfailingly courteous, with a strong sense of right and wrong, and an excellent awareness of the faiths and beliefs of others. They embrace British values of tolerance, democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law. They benefit from excellent pastoral care which treats each pupil as an individual. The school environment is healthy, safe and caring.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent, and create the atmosphere in which pupils of all ages grow and mature quickly and safely, academically, socially, emotionally and physically. The school is constantly scrutinising its own practice, it has clear priorities for the education of its pupils, and is constantly seeking to improve what it offers in academic, pastoral and extra-curricular provision. The school manages its day-to-day business efficiently, with the success and happiness of the pupils always at the heart of its approach.
- 2.4 The recommendations of the previous inspection report have been addressed carefully and effectively. Assessment testing in the senior school now means that the school has data on each pupil. It is now considering the best ways in which to use the data fully for the benefit of the pupils. Independent learning now features strongly in many lessons, with increased use of ICT by pupils planned to further enhance both teaching and learning. Teachers' use of interactive whiteboards is fully embedded in classroom practice. Healthy eating is visibly a part of the school's expectations, at all stages of development. The provision of meals in the school's dining room and the place of nutrition in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and physical education (PE) ensure that pupils' health is given a high priority.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the progress already made in integrating ICT into the curriculum is fully implemented throughout the school.
2. Ensure that the use of assessment data to track and monitor pupils' progress is developed so that the achievement of all groups can be maximised.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is successful in its aim to promote academic achievement and provide breadth in its co-curricular provision, enabling pupils to make excellent progress. Throughout the school, pupils develop a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding through a highly flexible curriculum and programme of activities.
- 3.3 In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children enjoy and benefit from a wide range of learning experiences. In Nursery, they learn numbers up to twenty and initial sounds; they donned masks and played with houses they had made in class, while reading the book of the week, 'The Three Little Pigs', outdoors. In a numeracy lesson, children counted sticks and straw to make collage houses, and in PE they played 'What's the time, Mr Wolf!' In Reception, building blocks were used to learn about subtraction. Children used tablet computers to take photographs and used desktop computers for games and drawing programmes. Children initiate their own learning activities. By the end of Reception, the majority of children exceed national norms. They are competent at addition and subtraction, and most write sentences independently.
- 3.4 In both the junior and senior schools, the pupils' all-round achievement is excellent. They develop very high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills, in speaking, listening, reading, writing, logical and independent thought, creativity and physical activity. Achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are good and the school has made recent investments to integrate the use of tablets into the curriculum.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in national tests at age 7 have been far above the national average, and at age 11 have been above the national average in maintained primary schools. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained secondary schools. The proportion of A*/A grades is significantly higher than the national average.
- 3.6 This level of attainment, taken together with the substantial progress observed in lessons and other work, means that all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are able, gifted and talented, make excellent progress throughout the school in light of their abilities and needs. In particular, pupils with SEND make excellent progress in literacy and numeracy.
- 3.7 Pupils participate willingly in lessons. This is supported by excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils focus on their learning, and take a pride in the presentation and organisation of their work. They are skilled at identifying gaps in their knowledge and readily seek clarification from their teachers where necessary. They show initiative and a strong capacity for independent learning, and they collaborate well when working in pairs and groups. Pupils have excellent relationships with one another, and show great care and support for their peers, reflecting the family values of the school.
- 3.8 Pupils listen carefully in lessons and speak with confidence about their learning styles. They are ambitious with their targets and keen to impress their teachers.

Pupils are successful in a wide range of activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award scheme and the Mayor of Sunderland awards. Individuals have won representative honours in skiing, gymnastics, football and cricket.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 Throughout the school, the curriculum covers the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas of learning well. The curriculum is flexible and adaptable to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils as fully as possible. It is consistent with the school's aim that education should be fun and that each pupil should work hard to achieve their best.
- 3.11 In the EYFS the school makes excellent provision for children of all abilities. The educational programmes have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning. This enables all children to achieve above average levels of development. Staff make it a priority to tailor the curriculum to ensure it reflects the children's interests and takes into account how children learn.
- 3.12 The junior school curriculum covers National Curriculum subjects, with the addition of French, PSHE and religious education. A good range of subjects is studied in the senior school. The recent introduction of PSHE has enhanced the curriculum further. Pupils have welcomed its introduction; they give specific examples of ways in which the school contributes to their personal development, referring to the family values that permeate the school and the moral compass encouraged by all staff. The options system for GCSE is constantly under review, and offers a good range of subjects for pupils of all abilities.
- 3.13 Provision for creative and aesthetic subjects has had significant investment since the previous inspection, with further new music accommodation and a programme of instrumental tuition provided by visiting specialists. Evidence of learning outside the curriculum was seen in wall displays of Mexican death masks and a recent fashion show where the clothes had been designed by senior school pupils.
- 3.14 The school's curriculum policy guides subject co-ordinators in the formulation of their schemes of work. Planning is thorough and exemplified throughout the school by specific learning outcomes, celebration of achievements, and details of provision for the able gifted and talented, as well as those with SEND. The school diagnoses pupils' needs on entry and identifies appropriate strategies. These are then incorporated into a plan for each individual. The school provides specialist support, and planning in mainstream lessons ensures that all pupils' needs are fully met.
- 3.15 The senior pupils attach great importance to a recently developed programme of careers guidance, in which pathways are marked out for each pupil following a searching individual interview.
- 3.16 Excellent links with the local community have enabled a good programme of curricular enrichment, including visits to museums in the city and use of a nearby theatre, and visits from people in the community to the school to offer advice on careers.
- 3.17 The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, placing emphasis on the development of social skills. Pupils speak warmly of their experiences on skiing trips, the annual camp in the Lake District, and field study trips. Pupils benefit from

instrumental music tuition individually and in groups, and from regular drama productions. In the most recent junior school play all pupils were able to take part. The excellent games programme has incorporated rock climbing, squash, badminton and martial arts to cater for individual needs and make best use of the sports hall. Enterprising use of locally available facilities has also extended the range of team games on offer, with fixture lists created, specialist coaching supplied, and facilities adapted for the purpose.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 Teaching promotes the pupils' progress effectively in line with the school's aim to make learning fun, and encourage pupils to work hard. In the large majority of excellent lessons observed, teaching was characterised by clear expectations, strong subject knowledge, and lively and enthusiastic presentation. Lessons were well planned, used a range of resources effectively, and encouraged and supported independent learning. Teaching does not yet use ICT to full advantage.
- 3.20 In EYFS, teaching is characterised by high expectations and aspirational targets. Assessment is three-way, and parents fill in an observation booklet each term covering the areas of learning. Children evaluate their own work using smiley faces. The school has a clear picture of the children's achievement to supplement regular formal assessments. Teachers are therefore able to motivate the children effectively. They use good quality resources.
- 3.21 Elsewhere throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively, either in groups or in pairs, and share their ideas, providing mutual support. They are enthusiastic in seizing opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment, which are frequent in most lessons. Teachers have invariably established excellent relationships with their pupils, based on mutual respect, and they take full advantage of small class sizes. High standards of behaviour are the norm, and pupils are fully engaged across a range of tasks. Pre-inspection questionnaires completed by pupils confirm that the majority find their work interesting. They agreed that their teachers support them effectively when necessary.
- 3.22 Teachers ensure that pupils participate well in class, engaging them in dialogue to test out their ideas. Teachers value highly pupils' contributions and celebrate their work by means of praise in lessons and displays around the school. Teachers reinforce positive learning attitudes through the widespread use of the school's '5Rs' learning profile. This seeks to make pupils reflective, responsible, resourceful, resilient and reasoning. There is appropriate support for pupils of all ages with all needs and abilities, and for any pupil with a statement of special educational need.
- 3.23 Able, gifted and talented pupils were observed to have opportunities to be challenged with additional responsibilities in the classroom, including taking leading parts in debate. They benefited from extension tasks such as creating a poem based on rules from 'The Divergent Book Series', and in a Year 7 mathematics lesson where pupils applied problem-solving skills involving the angle sum of triangles and algebra.
- 3.24 The use of tablet computers is being integrated into the curriculum, being especially effective in the EYFS and in the junior school; the school recognises the need to fully implement their use throughout the school. The range of other teaching resources is

well used to support learning. The teaching of practical subjects benefits from good resources; for example, pupils undertake practical science lessons regularly.

- 3.25 Marking is consistent across and within academic departments, using an agreed policy of acknowledging content, presentation and effort. The large majority of marking identifies clear targets for development, which are revisited periodically. Pupils comment on the usefulness of this feedback.
- 3.26 The way in which the school assesses pupils and monitors their progress has been improved since the previous inspection, but has not yet been fully implemented to track the progress of all pupils. The recent appointment of assessment co-ordinators means that there is now the opportunity to explore more fully ways in which the data can be used effectively to enhance teaching and learning. Pupils appreciate discussing target-setting with their teachers.

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, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils show considerable spiritual development. The school successfully fulfils its aim of providing a very safe and caring environment in which family values are reflected. Individuals demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and are kind and considerate towards one another. They are confident in their own abilities, articulate about their pride in belonging to the school, and express themselves enthusiastically about the opportunities they have and what they have gained from the school. Their evident self-esteem builds as they move through the school, growing in confidence and maturity.
- 4.3 Pupils gain an excellent understanding of their own and others' faiths through religious studies lessons in the junior school and PSHE lessons in the senior school. Posters on main thoroughfares highlight aspects of religious faith and beliefs. Pupils take advantage of the numerous opportunities to grow in self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through many aspects of the school's work, from participation in school productions, being in a team, or serving as a prefect or school council member.
- 4.4 Pupils display excellent moral understanding. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, and demonstrate readiness to follow rules to guide their behaviour. Pupils move about the school quietly and listen respectfully to their teachers and each other. Pupils understand the need for rewards and sanctions, and are aware that their choices about behaviour have consequences. Pupils understand and enjoy the rewards of house and merit points, and the collective house prize of a fun trip, as well as the recognition of personal success through the merit passport scheme. They demonstrate an excellent level of maturity as they consider moral and ethical issues, as seen in a Year 6 class debate on breaking the law or a Year 11 form time discussion of three-parent babies. Pupils are heavily involved in the extensive fundraising activities of the school. This embraces local concerns such as a children's hospice, and national charities to support children.
- 4.5 The pupils' excellent social development is evident in the ease with which they talk to adults, and the fact that their behaviour at all times is respectful and courteous. Children in EYFS make a positive contribution and develop suitable skills for their transition into Year 1. Older pupils are excellent role models for younger pupils, through their behaviour and attitudes, and through the way in which they discharge more formal responsibilities as prefects, peer mentors, or in addressing assemblies. A substantial number of pupils do community service through the DofE Award scheme, or serve as school councillors. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that they were not given the chance to take on roles of responsibility. The inspection team found that while many formal roles are limited to older pupils, many pupils of all ages are encouraged to display social responsibility through mentoring, helping others academically, or taking on supervisory roles during field study trips, camping and skiing expeditions.
- 4.6 The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. A curriculum audit has highlighted the contribution of individual subjects, along with the scheme of work in the PSHE programme, and the weekly

assembly topics. In a PSHE lesson, pupils discussed what it meant to be British, as well as why people migrated to Britain. The school runs an annual European week, and classroom displays include a good deal on how the European Union is formed.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural awareness is well developed. In music, art and drama pupils are given the chance to explore both western and other cultures. Examples of art around the school included aboriginal-inspired sculptures and, in a Year 2 class, art that was based on festivals of light, including Diwali, Hannukah, and Christmas. Pupils have the opportunity to have Egyptian pen-pals, with a group from Egypt scheduled to visit later in the year.
- 4.8 By the time they leave the school, pupils are confident, self-aware, and emotionally mature for their age. They have a clear understanding of their role in the world, and of their responsibility towards others.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 Staff provide highly effective support and guidance for pupils. Excellent communication ensures that any concern about pupils is dealt with quickly and effectively. Teachers know their pupils well; in turn, pupils trust their teachers, and always feel able to confide in them if the need arises. The staff's constant awareness of all pupils' well-being matches the school's aim to develop each pupil academically, socially, emotionally and physically.
- 4.11 In the Nursery, the class teacher and the classroom assistant are the key people. They help children form secure emotional attachments providing them with a strong basis to develop confidence and independence. They are excellent role models, ensuring that children behave well, respect each other, and play very well together. The EYFS has given a high priority to children's well-being by achieving the local authority Healthy Early Years award for its programme covering environment, healthy eating, and physical, personal, social and emotional development.
- 4.12 The house structure provides competition and co-operation and helps to nurture the family atmosphere and values central to the school's ethos. High levels of supervision by senior staff allows frequent personal recognition and praise, as well as the opportunity to share any concerns.
- 4.13 The school is extremely effective in promoting good behaviour and in guarding against bullying and harassment. Pupils recognise that bullying is not acceptable, and agreed that the rare instances are dealt with promptly and effectively. Cyber-bullying and internet safety are covered in ICT. A small minority of pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire responses suggested that teachers were not fair in the way they gave rewards and sanctions. Interviews with pupils did not reflect this, and inspection of records of sanctions suggested that these were applied very rarely.
- 4.14 The school has established an internal survey amongst pupils conducted in PSHE lessons, with the aim of monitoring how they feel about their experiences in school. Its findings mirror closely the very positive comments made by pupils in interviews and in the pre-inspection questionnaires. Extra support groups meet regularly to mentor pupils for whom that would be beneficial. 'Worry boxes' are available in junior school classrooms.

- 4.15 Healthy eating has been given a higher priority since the previous inspection. Lunch and snacks are now provided in school rather than being brought in from outside suppliers. The PSHE programme and PE lessons emphasise the importance of healthy eating and the benefits of exercise, and posters by pupils are displayed in classrooms. External agencies such as local authority nurses are used as and when appropriate.
- 4.16 A small minority of pupils said in the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school did not listen to or take account of their opinions. Senior pupils spoke positively about the school council and were clear that suggestions were acknowledged and acted on. For example, girls have recently been allowed to wear boots in cold weather. Likewise, the school has been quick to respond to the wish for a girls' netball team, and to take into account pupils' views on forthcoming changes to the school uniform.
- 4.17 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.18 All pupils interviewed said that they felt safe in the school, and parental responses in pre-inspection questionnaires also acknowledged the great importance given to creating the school's safe and caring environment.

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

- 4.19 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.20 Arrangements for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all pupils, including children in EYFS, are highly effective in practice. A number of shortcomings identified in the written safeguarding policy on the school website were quickly rectified. All teaching and support staff are familiar with the policy, and have received appropriate training, so that they are aware of their responsibilities for child protection, and of the procedures they are required to follow. Good working links have been established with the local children's social care services. Any concerns about pupils' welfare have been dealt with in accordance with official guidance, and record keeping is detailed and meticulous. Recruitment checks have been carried out and recorded appropriately.
- 4.21 Policies and procedures relating to health and safety ensure that the school environment is secure for pupils. The school takes appropriate measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, including by means of regular fire drills. Fire risk assessments are monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly with the help of external consultants. Similarly, equipment is maintained and checked at suitable intervals. Fire evacuation procedures, signage and exits are all clearly displayed and marked in both sections of the school. All deficiencies are noted, and remedial action identified, recorded, and signed off when completed.
- 4.22 The school conducts and stores appropriate and thorough risk assessments relating to the school buildings, including the science laboratory, and before any off-site activities.
- 4.23 The medical care of pupils who are ill or injured is effective and there is appropriate accommodation in the centre of the school. Admission registers and attendance registers are suitably kept, and recording procedures are in line with legal requirements.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The proprietor provides effective oversight of the school's educational standards, ensuring excellent academic outcomes and personal development for pupils, including those in the EYFS. The long family association with the school means that it continues to cherish its traditional characteristics. At the same time, fresh thinking is introduced wherever it may benefit the pupils.
- 5.3 Ways of consulting beyond the school, which draw on excellent support and expertise, have been established. This ensures that the school handles financial planning, strategy, recruitment and regulatory compliance effectively. The proprietor's responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety are fulfilled and safeguarding procedures reviewed each year. The school is exploring ways in which the site might be developed, and the facilities expanded and improved, with the happiness and success of the pupils determining priorities at every stage.
- 5.4 The proprietor, as head, has an intimate understanding and knowledge of the work of the school, and plays a full part in its academic, pastoral and extra-curricular life. This embodies the energy and imagination the school feeds on, and sets the standards for staff. This clear direction of the school is central to its success.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management are highly successful in promoting the aims and the distinctive ethos of the school. They maintain the strong values and traditions of a family school as well as creating and sustaining a safe and caring environment where children can have fun, work hard, and develop into strong and successful individuals.
- 5.7 Leadership and management in the EYFS are excellent. The leadership and staff work closely together and share a commitment to continuous improvement of practice and the children's achievement. Effective self-evaluation enables the school to identify clear priorities for improvement. It monitors the educational programme and the quality of teaching, and arranges appropriate professional development where the need arises. The safeguarding, development and welfare requirements for the EYFS are understood and well met. The setting has made good progress since the previous inspection.
- 5.8 The structure and roles of the senior team reflect the emphasis on the quality of relationships and of communication, with responsibility fluid and shared, rather than rigid and formal. Leaders and managers are extremely effective in exemplifying and nourishing the school's caring culture, taking pains to ensure that each pupil is treated as an individual.
- 5.9 The school's formulation and implementation of policies are systematic and thorough, and in general it monitors carefully their effectiveness. These policies

represent an ambition to improve constantly the provision for the pupils' academic progress. Recent initiatives have addressed issues raised at the previous inspection as well as those which the school has identified as part of its own exhaustive self-evaluation processes. Priority has been given, therefore, to the development of a range of teaching styles and to making the curriculum broader and more flexible so as to meet the needs of all pupils across the ability range. New assessment procedures and tracking mechanisms ensure that pupils' needs are more fully understood. The use of the data produced as a result is playing an increasingly important role in how the school approaches teaching.

- 5.10 Curriculum co-ordinators have enabled the school to develop a more systematic approach to subject leadership, including the revision of schemes of work. Throughout the school, the professional review system links appraisal to continuing professional development ensuring that staff reflect on and improve their practice.
- 5.11 The school attaches great importance to matters of child protection, welfare, health and safety, and discharges its responsibilities in these areas with great care and attention to detail. The processes of staff recruitment, appraisal and training are thorough and appropriate, contributing to a safe and productive environment in which pupils can learn and grow. Staff are fully trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Appropriate care is taken to ensure the suitability of staff and any governors for their work with children.
- 5.12 Links with parents, guardians and carers are excellent. In pre-inspection questionnaires the vast majority of respondents say their children are happy, feel safe, and are well looked after. They acknowledge that the required information about the school at all stages is readily available.
- 5.13 Close communication with parents is maintained with helpful and informative reports twice a year, and an excellent website with a dedicated portal for parents. Parents have access to an abundance of information about school calendars, policies, newsletters, information about trips and visits, and curriculum information enabling them to be fully involved in their children's education. The school has an active parent teacher association, which supports the school through regular fundraising and social events. The school has an open door policy, and the head is always available to parents before and after school. Parental questions and concerns are given prompt attention and are sympathetically resolved. In the period since the previous inspection, there have been no formal complaints.

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