



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **INTEGRATED INSPECTION CHANDLINGS**

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## Chandlings

Full Name of School	<b>Chandlings</b>
DfE Number	<b>931/6117</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY394338</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>309639</b>
Address	<b>Chandlings Bagley Wood Kennington Oxford Oxfordshire OX1 5ND</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01865 730771</b>
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Email Address	<b>annapoole@chandlings.org.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Cath Bufton-Green</b>
Proprietors	<b>The Cothill Educational Trust</b>
Chair of the Trust	<b>Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher</b>
Age Range	<b>1 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>460</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys and Girls (273 boys; 187 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-1 (EYFS): 1      5-11: 360 2-5 (EYFS): 99</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Maria McAloon</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys and Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>1to 4 March 2016</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 EYFS intermediate inspection was in May 2014 and the previous ISI interim inspection was in November 2010.

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 Trust principal and a trustee member of the local advisory group. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Mr Nathan Close	Team Inspector (Academic Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Lancaster-Adlam	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Lynn Maggs-Wellings	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Miss Katy Morgan	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Mr David Tidmarsh	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Morgan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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

- 1.1 Chandlings is a co-educational day school located near Oxford. It was founded in 1994 and is one of eight schools managed by the Cothill Educational Trust, whose board of trustees administers the school, supported by a local advisory group, chaired by one of the trustees. A new principal, who is not a trustee, was appointed to the Trust head office in January 2015. His role is similar to a chief executive, acting as a link between the eight schools and the board, as well as leading the whole organisation. The leadership team for Chandlings was restructured in September 2014 and a new head was appointed in September 2015.
- 1.2 The school buildings are at the centre of the school site, which extends to approximately 60 acres, including playing fields, stables and a riding arena. The original farmhouse building has been expanded over time to create more classrooms and specialist areas, and a dedicated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a first-class preparatory education, with high academic expectations delivered in an exciting and stimulating way by means of a well-balanced curriculum. Through this, it intends that pupils receive a strong educational foundation to gain a life-long love of learning.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Most pupils come from local business or professional families and are of white British backgrounds. In the EYFS, for children under 5 years of age, there are currently 100 children enrolled, 61 boys and 39 girls. Of these, forty-three attend part-time and one is under two years of age. In Years 1 to 6 there are 360 pupils, 212 boys and 148 girls. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan but 41 pupils have been identified by the school as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are 37 pupils who require language support because they speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 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 excellent, including in the EYFS. The school provides pupils with a strong educational foundation to gain a life-long love of learning, in keeping with its aims. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education. Skills develop well across a range of subjects because teaching is excellent across the age range, including in the EYFS. It features high academic expectations, delivered in an exciting and stimulating way. The support for pupils with SEND or EAL is very strong and is well organised. Individual assistance in lessons is good. The high proportion of pupils gaining scholarships to selective senior schools shows that the more able pupils, and others, are thoroughly supported and challenged. Pupils' exemplary attitudes to learning, impeccable behaviour and strong relationships with one another and their teachers help them to draw full benefit from a good curriculum that is well suited to their needs but includes a small proportion of poorly used taught time. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) are good but they are not fully used across the curriculum to support learning. An excellent extra-curricular programme warmly enriches pupils' experiences, offering something for everyone, of high value, that meets a wide range of interests.
- 2.2 Throughout the school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are increasingly aware of the concept of Britishness. High quality pastoral care from all staff enables pupils to feel confident and supported. The school implements its behaviour and anti-bullying policies conscientiously and effectively. Attention to welfare, health and safety is good. Aspects such as maintenance tests and checks are thorough. Policies and procedures to safeguard children needed adjustment during the inspection. All now meet the latest requirements.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is sound. New and effective ways of working are just being developed to strengthen the support and challenge governance provides for the school. Staff and pupils are already reaping the benefits of the new principal's work with the school. However, the impact of governance is not yet good because governors' monitoring of the work of the school has been insufficient, including the EYFS. Minor administrative errors in documents were put right during the inspection and procedures now reflect practice. All aspects of leadership and management are excellent. New leadership arrangements are rapidly settling, and there is a palpable clarity of direction and teamwork among staff at all levels. Systems to keep track of pupils' progress have improved recently, but they are too varied to be of best use to ensure continuous improvement. Almost all parents who expressed a view confirmed their support for all aspects of the school and said that their children are happy and safe at the school.

**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.
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under two.

**(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the effectiveness of monitoring the school's work by trustees, including the EYFS, in order to provide better support and challenge to the school.
  2. Develop the tracking of pupils' progress so that it is consistently strong and used well to guide pupils' next learning steps.
  3. Use all taught time effectively to enhance pupils' progress, and broaden the use of ICT to support their learning across the curriculum.

### **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 Pupils are extremely well educated in accordance with the school's aim for them to receive a strong educational foundation. They display high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their academic work. They are articulate and demonstrate a high standard of literacy and numeracy, and their contributions in class, in speaking and listening, and on paper, confirm an excellent level of logical thought and analytical ability. Pupils read fluently. They apply their mathematical knowledge efficiently to solving problems in scientific and geographical calculations. They enjoy the challenge of purposeful investigation and research. Pupils' creativity, as observed in artwork they have produced over time, is of a high standard. They sing and play instruments with skill and enthusiasm, many achieving merits and distinctions in external examinations in music. They are competent users of ICT in ICT lessons, but their technological skills are developed less in other subjects. They display highly developed physical skills across a range of sports. Skills shown in the extensive extra-curricular activities programme are excellent, including in debating, horse riding and archery.
- 3.3 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests. Pupils attain standards above the national average in other standardised attainment tests. When additional evidence is taken into account, attainment is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. The additional evidence includes performance in lessons, work scrutiny; school data on the progress pupils make and discussions with pupils alongside their work. It also takes into account the demands of the academic curriculum.
- 3.4 This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils' progress is excellent throughout the school, in relation to their ability. This enables them to be highly successful in gaining places at academically selective senior schools, often achieving scholarships. Pupils with SEND or EAL, who are given a high standard of support, make rapid progress in relation to their starting points. More able pupils also make excellent progress due to the challenge built into individual teaching plans devised with them.
- 3.5 Pupils' achievements are well supported by their often exemplary attitudes towards learning. In questionnaire responses, almost all said that they feel they are making good progress. Pupils of all ages are keen to learn and they commit themselves to producing excellent work, taking particular pride in their achievements. They settle efficiently to tasks and show high levels of concentration. Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative skills, yet work equally well independently. They are proud to congratulate others' successes, for example through 'work of the week' ('WOW') celebrations. Their exemplary behaviour in class contributes to a purposeful learning environment, and the positive relationships that they share with one another and their teachers have a thoroughly beneficial impact on their achievement and prepare them well for their next school.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.7 The curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. It provides a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. Linguistic skills are enhanced by the provision of modern foreign languages such as French. German is offered, particularly enabling the school's temporary German pupils to keep up their language skills before returning to resume their education in Germany. Pupils deemed suitable are also offered Latin. In their questionnaire responses, almost all parents strongly approved of the range of subjects provided.
- 3.8 Pupils are grouped by ability from an early age in numeracy and literacy. This assists in meeting their individual needs and enables maximum progress, for example in phonics and reading. In all subjects, but particularly the humanities, including history, geography and religious education, staff are careful to ensure that political viewpoints are presented in an unbiased manner and that democracy and the rule of law, for example, are not undermined. Opportunities for scientific enquiry abound, often using the extensive woodland site. Older pupils used the lake and pontoon to complete investigative work during the inspection.
- 3.9 Pupils have good opportunities to express their creativity in art, music and drama. An example seen was a Book Week presentation, when pupils performed an extract from *Oliver*. Sports facilities support a wide range of sports provision: full use is made of outdoor pitches, a gymnasium and an indoor swimming pool. Pupils are provided with swimming lessons from the age of four.
- 3.10 Curricular planning is mostly good and largely meets the aims of the school for the curriculum to be well balanced. The programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is a strength due to its content and breadth, and it enables pupils to develop high quality personal skills and to learn about living within contemporary British society, for example in work on the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. However, in each year group, the weekly taught time contains a small proportion of unclear, less structured activities. These sessions sometimes make little effective contribution to pupils' progress and learning.
- 3.11 Information and communication technology is expertly provided as a separate specialist subject in a dedicated computer suite. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards by teaching staff to enhance learning in class lessons. There is little evidence of pupils interacting with the whiteboards themselves or of ICT being used to support learning over a range of subjects in class.
- 3.12 Throughout the school the provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent, with many specialist teaching groups and booster sessions. The provision for pupils with EAL enables them to learn English quickly and make excellent progress. Opportunities abound for the more able pupils to extend and develop their learning. New initiatives in planning for this group are leading to even stronger provision, thus responding to a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.13 The extra-curricular programme is excellent. Questionnaire responses and inspection evidence showed that pupils of all age groups highly value, and take great advantage of, the extensive activities and clubs on offer, many of which forge strong community links. The programme greatly enriches pupils' learning experiences and achievement across a range of physical, aesthetic, creative, technological and academic interests. The many sports and artistic pursuits are

supplemented by, for example, ballet, chess and cookery, to give just a flavour of the provision. Pupils' opinions are sought with regard to new club selections and a termly audit is carried out to monitor the effectiveness of the programme. Trips and visits further enhance and broaden pupils' experiences in this country and abroad.

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

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Teaching supports the pupils' achievement well and fulfils the aims of the school for them to be given a strong educational foundation, delivered in an exciting and stimulating way.
- 3.16 Most teaching provides opportunities for evaluation and critical thinking and encourages pupils to be independent thinkers, actively seeking to extend their own learning. Expectations of the pupils are high and all abilities are catered for. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. Teachers draw upon their experiences and knowledge to ignite the imagination and interest of the pupils. In a history lesson on World War I trenches, pupils discussed the conditions faced by soldiers with sensitivity and were moved by the war poetry of Ivor Gurney.
- 3.17 Teaching is constantly improving. This is because there is a robust programme of regular lesson observation by senior staff, together with a rigorous programme of book scrutiny. In this way, a thorough sharing of excellent practice is ensured and pupils make good and often rapid progress during lessons.
- 3.18 Wherever possible, teachers provide practical experiences in their lessons to foster pupils' tolerance and respect, enthusiasm and application. This positively enhances behaviour and learning. Teachers are non-partisan in their coverage of any political issues. They work together with other adults in class to support the learning of groups and individuals. They employ a varied range of tasks and make excellent use of most resources, carefully managing time so that pupils remain alert and learning is brisk. In the very few less successful sessions seen, planning was, by contrast, weak, in sessions that lacked focus. In these lessons, pupils were not sure of the learning objectives and, consequently, their progress slowed.
- 3.19 Teachers know their pupils very well, and the good rapport between staff and pupils is based on mutual respect. A few pupils, in questionnaire responses, felt that homework does not help them to learn. A check of pupils' homework records indicated that most homework provides good support for the learning that takes place in class. A good response has been made to the recommendation from the previous inspection to monitor the application of marking so that practice consistently reflects the examples of best practice seen. Work is now marked regularly and pupils are given clear written feedback regarding next steps. Achievements are praised. Often a specific target for further progress is given. Opportunities for pupils to set their own targets are also provided, and in some year groups these are displayed on classroom boards.
- 3.20 Pupils' attainment is checked annually using standardised testing. Assessments are scrutinised in staff meetings, known as 'net' meetings, to ensure that appropriate interventions are implemented wherever necessary. Individual pupils' progress is also tracked throughout the year by middle leadership. However, staff employ a variety of different approaches. This results in a lack of consistency which limits the use that can be made of the tracking to consolidate and accelerate pupils' progress.

- 3.21 Excellent responses have been made to the previous inspection recommendation to ensure that all pupils, including the more able, are consistently well challenged in lessons. Pupils' needs are met fully through tasks that precisely match their level of knowledge and understanding. Pupils with SEND or EAL are very well supported by teachers and learning support assistants during lessons. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in their praise for 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 The school actively promotes experiences that enable pupils to develop a sense of achievement and self-worth, together with a positive attitude and high expectations of themselves. Pupils make the most of the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities as well as taking advantage of the life-long learning experiences, fully in keeping with the school's aims.
- 4.3 Pupils' awareness of the traits that contribute to being British develops strongly through PSHEE, philosophy and other curriculum subjects, such as history, along with assemblies. They also explore these traits for themselves. As a result, pupils know how democracy works, they understand the rule of law and individual liberty, and are strong advocates of human rights. They are averse to discrimination of any kind. Involvement in elections for the school council and the 'eco-committee' are valued by pupils as expressions of their voice within the school. Across the school pupils develop an understanding of English institutions, for example courts of law, the Houses of Parliament, and the police and fire services.
- 4.4 Pupils are confident about expressing their opinions. They feel comfortable in their surroundings and show excellent spiritual development. Opportunities to explore philosophical questions and regular collective worship allow space for pupils to reflect thoughtfully and to develop emotional maturity. Pupils' appreciation for the natural world and their joy of music are seen throughout the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.
- 4.5 Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong; their moral development is excellent. They respect the school rules and code of conduct, which is reviewed and amended by members of the school council. Behaviour both in class and around the school is of the highest standard; pupils are courteous, helpful and kind. Having developed a strong moral sense, from examples set by adults around them, they clearly understand the importance of fairness and equality. They have a strong understanding of what they feel is right and wrong in the environment, valuing highly the work of the 'eco-committee'.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent. They demonstrate support for others, taking responsibility for the well-being and happiness of those around them. They enjoy each other's company both within the classroom and while engaging in recreational activity. Positions of responsibility are accepted with pride and carried out with commitment and loyalty. Older pupils are supportive of younger members of the community, working co-operatively and cohesively to the mutual benefit of all. They enjoy acting as 'knight mentors' for new pupils, helping them to integrate quickly into school life. The variety of charity fund-raising events helps pupils understand their responsibility to assist those who are less fortunate, both at home and overseas.
- 4.7 Pupils in all year groups develop excellent cultural awareness, for example as a result of an annual international day, when each class is assigned a country to learn about. The home countries of pupils with EAL are celebrated through key festivals, customs and traditions. Through the religious education curriculum, pupils learn to become respectful and tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs, and take great interest in valuing and learning about their own and other cultural traditions.

- 4.8 Pupils have excellent standards of personal development by the time they leave the school, preparing them well to undertake the next stage in their educational and life journey. Almost all pupils said that they like being at school in their questionnaire responses.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The school successfully achieves its pastoral aims. It deals effectively with pastoral issues through a clear line management structure. This results in strong support and guidance for pupils and promotes their pastoral well-being, involving staff at all levels. Pertinent information is quickly disseminated to all teaching staff electronically and in weekly staff meetings. The excellent supportive guidance fully meets pupils' needs. Girls have access to weekly 'chat' sessions, and boys can have one-to-one sessions with tutors which effectively support their pastoral care.
- 4.11 Relationships between staff and pupils, and among pupils themselves, are excellent. Positive behaviour is fully promoted. Staff carefully follow guidance in the comprehensive and effective anti-bullying and behaviour policies, which include cyber-bullying, and as a result, pupils' behaviour is often exemplary. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with constructively, and staff take due account of any adjustment needed for those with SEND. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.12 A few parents and pupils, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, indicated that bullying is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors investigated the school's records and discussed this aspect fully with staff and pupils. They found that the school's behaviour policy is consistently implemented, with robust procedures for guarding against bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment. Records and discussions indicated that allegations of bullying are taken seriously and appropriate responses are made, in accordance with the school's policy. A small minority of pupils stated in questionnaire responses that they do not feel teachers are fair in the way that they give rewards and sanctions. A study of records and pupils' workbooks did not uphold that view, and indicated that the school's procedures work effectively.
- 4.13 Healthy eating is thoroughly encouraged through recently improved healthy selections for lunch, though not always universally popular. Pupils understand the benefits of regular exercise and have excellent opportunities to maintain fitness through the wide range of sports activities in which they are encouraged to take part.
- 4.14 A good range of opportunities enables pupils to articulate their opinions, including a school council. Pupils are encouraged to make good choices and their opinions are valued. A very large majority of parents, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, stated that they feel their children are happy, safe and well cared for.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.16 Effective attention is paid to safeguarding pupils and promoting their health and well-being, and arrangements have regard to official guidance. All members of staff take part in regular safeguarding training at the appropriate level, including strategies for protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively at school and inter-agency level. Recently amended written procedures now faithfully reflect practice for reporting incidents to governors.
- 4.17 Effective arrangements are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Records show that fire equipment is meticulously and routinely checked. Fire drills are carried out regularly and diligently recorded, and action points implemented. Educational visits are carefully planned with the pupils' safety always in mind and comprehensive risk assessments are produced where appropriate.
- 4.18 Thorough health and safety procedures and policies, including a written risk assessment policy, are implemented effectively. First aid is dealt with promptly by those staff who are qualified as first aiders. A sufficient number are trained in paediatric first aid. Qualified personnel staff the suitable medical facility. Comprehensive medical records are kept, clearly documenting medication given, accidents, illness, injury and incidents. Staff are aware of those pupils who have SEND or specific health needs, such as for asthma or diabetes. Provision meets their needs because there is appropriate expertise available and effective communication between members of staff and parents.
- 4.19 Registration of pupils' attendance is correctly managed and recorded. The admission register was adjusted during the inspection and now includes all of the required entries. It is backed up and stored correctly, as are the required attendance registers.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The board of trustees, through the recently formed local advisory group, ensures that the aims for developing pupils' education are paramount in the school. The head's written termly report, and feedback provided to the trustees from the advisory group and principal, provide effective oversight of educational standards, and guide appropriate investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The principal visits the school regularly, which ensures that he is known to staff. He has a good insight into the general working of the school and, alongside the advisory group trustee, takes a keen interest in it.
- 5.3 In the short time that has elapsed since the trustees have delegated the monitoring of policy and practice to the principal, regular contact and visits have allowed for appropriate review of educational matters and improved support and challenge for the new school leadership. Meetings have taken place between the heads of the Trust's member schools, alongside the principal, and these allow a beneficial exchange of ideas. However, the monitoring of educational and pastoral provision, including in the EYFS, is still not fully developed.
- 5.4 The trustees discharge their responsibilities for health and safety and risk management effectively but their monitoring of a few of the policies and in-house record keeping has not been rigorous. Minor omissions in policies and differences between implementation and policy were remedied during the inspection, including the correction of minor administrative errors in essential records. The annual review of the safeguarding policy and child protection arrangements is carried out as required.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 At all levels, leadership and management are highly effective in promoting the school's aims. Academic and pastoral leadership arrangements ensure that careful attention is paid to the pastoral needs of the pupils as well as their academic success. Leadership within the school exercises effective and caring implementation of policies, including those for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their welfare.
- 5.7 New leadership has swiftly brought a clear and firm direction, strongly supported by staff at all levels. This is moving the school forward and the impact is already evident in pupils' excellent achievement, an improvement since the previous inspection, and in their very strong personal skills. Leadership and management at all levels strongly promote values that encourage respect for others. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Consultation throughout the school has contributed to the formulation of a new development plan, currently in draft form, that fully supports the school's aims and the leadership team's ambitious aspirations for pupils.

- 5.8 The leadership is highly successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff. This includes excellent teaching and support staff, and excellent administrative, maintenance and catering personnel. All fully support the leadership and management of the school. Policies and procedures for the appointment of staff, governors, volunteers and others include all the required vetting procedures, which are robustly implemented. Induction processes are thorough, ensuring that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. Training is comprehensive. Staff throughout the school are suitably trained for their roles in meeting pupils' needs, and in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety. Newly qualified teachers are well supported. Lesson observation and target setting are part of an improved appraisal process covering all staff, in response to a recommendation of the previous inspection. The successful peer and departmental observations, evaluation of planning and work scrutiny identify areas for personal and professional development. These are promptly addressed to ensure that improvements are quickly realised, and have a beneficial impact on pupils' academic success.
- 5.9 In pre-inspection questionnaire responses the vast majority of parents indicated that the school is well led and managed. They expressed strongly positive views about all aspects of the school's provision and the quality of communication with the school. Parents indicated that they feel their children are happy, safe and well cared for, and praised the range of subjects and educational experiences on offer, and the information they receive about the school and its policies. Half-termly newsletters and weekly information updates and reminders from staff ensure a regular flow of high quality communication.
- 5.10 The school fosters constructive relationships with parents in its efforts to meet its aims. The presence of the senior team, when pupils and their parents arrive each morning, further promotes warm relationships and provides opportunities for parents to discuss any issues or concerns they may have. There are many opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents to talk to staff about their children as well as wider aspects of school life. Records show that, should a parent have a concern or complaint, it is handled sensitively and in accordance with the school's published policy.
- 5.11 Parents are well informed about their children's progress through regular reports and termly parents' meetings. At all stages in the school, reports are detailed and include helpful comments in all curriculum areas. A small minority of parents indicated that they were not satisfied about the information they receive with regard their children's progress. Evidence gathered during the inspection from scrutiny of the school's reporting systems and discussions did not support this view. The school and parents work closely together to support the educational experiences for all pupils. Parents have many opportunities to be involved with the work and progress of their children. Among these are regular meetings to enable staff to explain what pupils will be learning. Parents are also invited to attend concerts, plays, sports matches and weekly celebration assemblies.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 6.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 6.2 As a result of the excellent teaching and learning experiences and the care they receive, children make rapid progress in relation to their starting points and are well prepared for the next stages in their education. Outstanding provision for those children with SEND or EAL and the more able ensures that their individual needs are met through challenge, early intervention and appropriate support.
- 6.3 Children are extremely happy and enthusiastic learners. When they arrive, they cheerfully greet their teachers and are keen to start the day. The caring, nurturing environment promotes their self-esteem and feelings of security, and leads to their excellent personal, social and emotional development.
- 6.4 Highly effective leadership and management oversee the continuous improvement of the EYFS through the evaluative practice that is firmly embedded in all aspects of the provision. Staff fully understand their shared responsibilities in safeguarding the children and maintaining stringent health and safety regimes.

### **6.(b) Effectiveness of leadership and management**

- 6.5 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 6.6 Regulatory compliance is efficiently monitored by staff who are fully aware of their responsibilities. This includes work to promote children's welfare, and prevent radicalisation and extremism. The leadership team oversees the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, ensuring the effective implementation of the educational programmes, which offer the children broad and balanced experiences, based on their individual needs and interests. Policies are regularly updated and staff are well informed of changes through meetings, training and ongoing communication. All staff take corporate responsibility for the safeguarding of children, and practices and procedures are effective, take account of official guidance and are conscientiously followed by all in the EYFS. A high priority is given to the continuous professional development of all staff members. In-service training sessions specifically address EYFS issues. Opportunities for individuals to attend courses and meetings and to add to their qualifications result in prompt improvements in practice. Regular appraisals and supervision meetings offer further support to staff in their roles within the school and in their career pathways.
- 6.7 Self-evaluation and reflective practice are strong features of the EYFS and leaders' ambitious vision has led to continuous improvement since the previous inspection. The recommendation to develop children's independence in all aspects of their day has been dealt with. Regular meetings provide all staff with the opportunity to contribute to plans for the continued development and improvement of all aspects of the setting's provision. Monitoring of the EYFS by governors is at an early stage of development.
- 6.8 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly positive in their support for every aspect of the EYFS and were extremely happy with

their children's educational experiences and the care they receive. The bright, warm, welcoming environment, imaginatively resourced classrooms and highly motivated and enthusiastic staff ensure that the children have an excellent start to their education. Carefully planned activities offer children outstanding opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of the EYFS curriculum and incorporate both indoor and outdoor experiences. The youngest children independently engage in activities of their own choice as well as playing co-operatively, happily sharing toys and equipment. Older Nursery children enjoy exploring the wealth of outdoor learning opportunities, such as rolling balls along pipes and digging in the garden. Reception children are highly imaginative in their role play and make their own resources to enhance their learning, as seen in the making of crowns for the pretend royal tea party. The needs of those children with SEND or EAL are met by staff who offer skilful, sensitive support to individuals or small groups, taking into account advice from specialist teachers and external agencies when appropriate. This ensures that any gaps in outcomes are narrowed. Ongoing assessments and observations efficiently monitor progress and achievements, thus ensuring that children are well prepared to move onto the next stage in their education.

- 6.9 British values, equality and diversity are actively promoted through consistent expectations in behaviour, encouraging the children to make good choices, and through celebrating individuality and providing opportunities for discussion of thoughts and feelings.

### **6.(c) Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

- 6.10 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 6.11 This is enhanced by the use of subject specialists in design technology, French, music and physical education. The consistently high expectations of staff motivate and enthuse the children, encouraging them to be active, questioning learners who clearly enjoy the well-planned activities and experiences of each day. Skilful interaction ensures that children at all stages in their development are suitably challenged and supported through an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning opportunities. These lead them to make rapid progress in relation to their starting points. Detailed and purposeful observations and assessments further support the children in their learning journeys and ensure that all staff have the opportunity to contribute to planning appropriate targets and next steps for both individual children and larger groups.
- 6.12 The well-qualified and experienced staff have excellent understanding of the needs of children in this age group and know the children exceedingly well. They work with parents to ensure that the needs of all children are met effectively, with appropriate interventions for those with SEND or EAL. Staff are extremely knowledgeable about how young children learn, and they work collaboratively to plan exciting activities that challenge the children to take initiative in their learning whilst building their confidence through praise and reinforcement. Children are encouraged to practise their basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy through the provision of wide-ranging, stimulating resources. These allow them to play and explore as they develop a sound base for their future learning and prepare for their transition to the next stage in their education. Staff interact skilfully with the youngest children as they play, ensuring the development of vocabulary and wider language skills, and supporting them by encouraging, for example, the correct grip for pencils and paintbrushes. Older Nursery children safely use scissors and show mature levels of

concentration and accuracy when cutting. Reception children confidently use rulers and saws under careful supervision, to measure and cut lengths of wood.

- 6.13 Information about their children's progress is readily shared with parents through informal meetings and discussions, as well as the termly parents' evenings. Additionally, parents of children in the Reception classes receive detailed written reports in the autumn and summer terms.
- 6.14 Children are encouraged to develop their understanding of the world in which they live and to appreciate different backgrounds, faiths and cultures through the celebration of festivals, the provision of resources and sharing experiences. Recently, families have been invited into the setting to talk to the children about Hanukkah and Chinese New Year. The supportive environment recognises equality and individuality, and places a high priority on helping children to celebrate these qualities. Sharing, taking turns, good manners and thoughtfulness are evident even in the youngest children, ensuring that they are well prepared as they move onto the next stage in their learning.

#### **6.(d) Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

- 6.15 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding.
- 6.16 Staff ensure that the children have a positive attitude to learning through praise and encouragement and through the celebration of achievements. The stimulating setting incorporates engaging, interactive displays of the children's work and experiences, of which they are proud and keen to share. Reception children, for example, were eager to talk about the emergency vehicles they had made.
- 6.17 Staff carefully plan opportunities to enable children to engage in active learning experiences that develop their creative and critical thinking. Two year olds show this, for example, in their music making with percussion instruments. Older children enjoy making puppets, writing book reviews, making and testing paddle boats and the wide ranging role-play scenarios they devise, selecting and making appropriate resources.
- 6.18 Strong relationships are formed through excellent staff ratios and the extremely effective use of the key person system in the Nursery classes and the small class sizes in the Reception year group. Staff encourage the growing independence of the children as they move through the EYFS and have fully addressed the recommendation at the previous inspection by providing more opportunities for children to develop their independence. Children are confident in pouring their own drinks, for example, and try to cut their food at lunchtime. Children also readily help each other and work co-operatively to achieve the required outcomes in daily routines such as tidying up.
- 6.19 Children show high standards of behaviour. They are clear about expectations that are reinforced during 'circle times' and adult-led sessions, when specific issues are addressed. A high priority is given to helping children learn about healthy lifestyles. Healthy eating is promoted through the provision of nutritious hot lunches and mid-morning snacks of fruit and vegetables. Children take part in a wide range of structured opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles, such as weekly physical education, games and swimming lessons. In addition, they enjoy the frequent, ongoing access to the scenic school grounds and EYFS outdoor spaces, which allow them to expend their energy as well as to engage in quieter pursuits such as

investigating windmills. Children understand how to keep themselves safe from risks, including when using the internet.

- 6.20 Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. Attendance is prompt and regular. Children are fully encouraged to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain, through, for example, trips and visits in the local and wider area, and recycling activities. The children are happy, friendly, secure individuals who embrace all aspects of school life with confidence and are well prepared to move onto the next stage in their education.

### **6.(e) Outcomes for children**

- 6.21 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 6.22 Supportive and effective teaching, together with appropriate interventions, ensures that children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. This includes the more able children, and those with SEND or EAL, who benefit from the specific provision that meets their individual needs and ensures the rapid development of their language skills. By the time they leave the EYFS, the majority of children have met the Early Learning Goals and many have exceeded these and are therefore well prepared for Year 1.
- 6.23 High levels of motivation, a joy of learning and a thirst for knowledge are evident throughout the EYFS. Children approach new tasks confidently. They are keen to share their experiences with adults and peers. The youngest children make choices and select tools, toys and equipment independently, making full use of the excellent resources. They can name colours and shapes, and they listen attentively to stories. The older Nursery children know and use many initial sounds correctly. They count accurately to twenty and beyond and are able to identify two-dimensional shapes, including semi-circles and pentagons. The more able Reception children read complex texts with fluency and understanding, and use their knowledge of sounds to write sentences. Reception children add numbers over twenty and are developing understanding of tens and units. They use programmable toys to negotiate maps, as well as cameras and tablet computers to record their work. They reinforce their knowledge of numbers and sounds using the interactive whiteboards.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under two**

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

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