



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
OUR LADY'S CONVENT SCHOOL**

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Our Lady's Convent School

Full Name of School	Our Lady's Convent School
DfE Number	855/6008
Registered Charity Number	1081765
Address	Our Lady's Convent School Gray Street Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2DZ
Telephone Number	01509 263901
Fax Number	01509 236193
Email Address	office@olcs.leics.sch.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Hawley
Chairman of Governors	Professor Alan Dodson
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	201
Gender of Pupils	Girls 3 to 18; Boys 3 to 11
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 17 5-11: 32 11-18: 152
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sharon Pratt
EYFS Gender	Boys and Girls
Inspection Dates	24 Nov 2015 to 27 Nov 2015

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. 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 standard inspection was in February and March 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 and with the chairman of governors and two other governors, 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 Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Kate McCarey	Team Inspector (Former Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mrs Susan O'Riordan	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mrs Geraldine Yandell	Team Inspector (Head of Junior School, ISA school)
Miss Valerie Craven	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Our Lady's Convent School is an independent day school in Loughborough for girls from the ages of three to eighteen, and boys from the ages of three to eleven. The school is organised into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children from the ages of three to five, the primary department, for pupils aged five to eleven, and the senior school, for pupils aged eleven to eighteen.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1850 by the Rosminian Sisters of Providence. In 2005, responsibility for the operation of the school was transferred from the Sisters to a newly established charitable company administered by a board of governors. In September 2015 the school, which retains its strong association with the Sisters, joined with Loughborough Endowed Schools (LES) to become the fourth school in its group. It is now overseen by the LES board of governors, through four of its members, who constitute the Our Lady's Convent School committee. Incorporating the former convent, the school is on a self-contained site near the centre of Loughborough.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 201 pupils in the school, of whom 17 children were in the EYFS, 10 of them part-time. Three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and one of them receives support. The school has identified 36 pupils as having special educational needs and/or difficulties (SEND), of whom 27 receive specialist learning support. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils come from professional or business families in Loughborough and the surrounding areas. Approximately one in six comes from an ethnic minority background, mainly Asian.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the primary department and senior school is above the national average overall, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented, and some variance in the spread and average ability between year groups. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average for pupils in sixth-form education; around two-thirds are of at least above average ability, with few having ability that is below average.
- 1.5 Founded on Catholic principles, the school aims to help its pupils to develop their potential within a Christian atmosphere and a caring community, irrespective of their personal faith, by encouraging qualities of personal responsibility, consideration, courtesy, tolerance and respect in their relationships with others. The school seeks to enable pupils' personal development through a broad base of knowledge and skills, and through enjoyment and active involvement with the process of learning. It strives to give pupils an understanding of the value of personal achievement through hard work, intellectual rigour, initiative and goal setting. In addition, the school sets out to develop pupils' self-confidence, self-expression, and independence in thought and action, and to gain the qualities which will enable them to become informed and contributing citizens to future society.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school succeeds in meeting its stated aims. The pupils' positive approach to their studies and exemplary classroom behaviour, allied to teaching of high quality and a well-planned curriculum, are reflected, below the sixth form, in their good and often rapid academic progress. This was acknowledged by both parents and pupils in their responses to the questionnaires. The small numbers of pupils in the sixth form, including those with SEND, benefit from a very generous choice of subjects and make appropriate progress. Leavers have a strong record of entry into their chosen degree courses. The pupils achieve high standards of personal fulfilment. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich their educational experience and enable them to develop their talents and aptitudes enjoyably and fruitfully. In some cases, the marking of pupils' work is excellent, however this high quality is not consistent across all subjects and educational stages. In the EYFS, as elsewhere, the needs of all children are successfully met: a nurturing lively environment enables the children to make excellent progress in their learning and development. There are, however, fewer opportunities outdoors for children to explore and learn about aspects of the natural world.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development throughout the school, including the EYFS, is excellent, reflecting the school's highly effective emphasis on their safeguarding and well-being. Provision to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety is thorough and effective. The school achieves very high standards of pastoral care, which is at the centre of its mission. The caring and supportive example set by staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. Parents commend the pupils' excellent behaviour, and inspection evidence fully supports this view. The quality of the pupils' personal development owes much to the 'family' atmosphere of the school's close community. Proud of their school, the pupils grow strongly in self-confidence and self-esteem. They display emotional maturity and undertake many initiatives to help others. They feel a strong sense of belonging to a place where they say they feel happy and safe. The older pupils benefit from many opportunities for leadership and service, and when they come to leave they are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives and education.
- 2.3 That the school's aims are being successfully realised is a strong testimony to the school's governance, past and present, and to its leadership and management. The commitment of the governors is wholehearted; they exercise effective oversight, and, together with the school's leadership, give a clear sense of direction. The example of dedication and care set by leadership and management is followed by staff and pupils. Efficient and well-developed management systems ensure that the school runs smoothly from day to day. The school has met the recommendations of the previous inspection, which relate to strategic development and academic improvement. It enjoys extremely good relations with parents, who express great satisfaction with the education their children receive and the way in which the school is run.

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) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that all marking of pupils' work is brought up to the standard of the best.
2. In the EYFS, develop the outdoor environment to enhance children's learning about the natural world.

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 In the EYFS, children's achievements and progress exceed age-related expectations in all the prescribed areas of learning, relative to their starting points, abilities and needs. Children with SEND or EAL all make excellent progress. The Nursery children enjoy exploring, investigating and problem solving. Practical activities help to foster children's speaking and listening skills, and they are able to count a range of everyday objects during activities and to count their peers as they line up. As active learners, the Reception children are able to concentrate and work independently, for example during writing activities linked to the celebration of Diwali, and they are able to write complete sentences. Many of the children can count up to 20 and beyond, and skilfully use mathematical language. Nursery and Reception children are able to think critically, demonstrated in problem solving and creative activities.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils, including those with SEND, display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material covered in their syllabuses. The overall standard of logical thought, application of mathematics, creativity, literacy, articulacy and physical activity is high, with speaking and the presentation of written work being notable strengths. Pupils become proficient in information and communication technology (ICT). In their responses to the questionnaire, pupils of all ages stated that they are making good progress in their work.
- 3.4 Primary department pupils are not entered for national tests. Consequently, their attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in these tests, but on the evidence available from observation of lessons, scrutiny of samples of pupils' work and discussions with individual pupils, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils achieve a high rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.5 The following analysis for senior school pupils uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools. A-level results have been similar to the national average for girls in maintained schools. Results in 2014 were higher than in 2012 and 2013, being above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. In recent years, a number of Year 13 pupils have opted to sit the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), achieving high grades. Almost all of the 2015 Year 13 leavers proceeded to degree courses, and to their first-choice university.
- 3.6 The level of attainment at GCSE and standardised measures of progress that are available indicate that pupils make progress in the senior school that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The level of attainment at A level and standards of progress that are available, together with observation of lessons and scrutiny of work during the inspection, indicate that pupils in the sixth form make progress that is appropriate in relation to pupils of similar ability. In the sixth form, there is greater variation in rates of progress, owing to a relatively wide

spread of ability in these numerically small year groups. At GCSE and A level, the overall results of pupils with SEND are comparable with those of other pupils.

- 3.7 Extra-curricular achievement in many areas is strong in response to an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and personal qualities. Netball teams have been successful at district and county level, and pupils have lately achieved athletics leadership qualifications. A large number of awards have been won in local and regional public speaking competitions. Many pupils gain awards at all three levels of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme. Other recent successes have included activities as diverse as regional and national art, writing and karting competitions. Pupils perform well in the choir and in musical productions, and the cheerleading groups are adept and skilful. The senior pupils' charitable initiative 'Caritas' has received national recognition; this group embodies the spirit of care, love and service central to the ethos and stated aims of the school.
- 3.8 Throughout the school, the pupils display an excellent attitude to their studies and an active involvement with the process of learning, in accordance with the school's aims. They apply themselves with evident enjoyment, are keen to do well and are eager to be challenged. They are enthusiastic, readily responsive, and offer opinions and answers articulately and confidently. Classroom behaviour is exemplary. The school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection to encourage pupils to think for themselves.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The school fully meets its aim to provide pupils with a broad base of knowledge and skills, and to enable them to become informed and contributing citizens to future society.
- 3.11 In the EYFS, detailed programmes cover all the set areas of learning and enable all children to reach their full potential. An appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities results in a wide range of indoor exploration and investigation opportunities. There are, however, fewer opportunities outdoors to explore and learn about aspects of the natural world. Nursery and Reception children have access to a variety of extra-curricular clubs, as well as board games and puzzles, and specialist teaching in French, physical education and music contributes significantly to fruitful outcomes for children. By the end of Reception, children's learning becomes more formal, with a greater emphasis on literacy and mathematics, ensuring that the children are fully prepared academically for their next stage.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, the well-planned curriculum is broad and balanced, and is effective in its coverage of the requisite areas of study. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. From Year 8 most pupils study a second modern foreign language. Pupils begin GCSE courses in religious education and science in Year 9, and are able to study up to ten GCSEs from a wide range of subjects. A-level pupils are offered a very wide range of subjects from which to choose. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive range of educational trips and visits that enhance the curriculum.
- 3.13 Personal, social, health, citizenship, careers and economic education (PSHCCEE) is effectively planned throughout the school. Pupils are asked to make democratic decisions on a regular basis, from choosing a pantomime to electing school council representatives. Careers guidance is appreciated by the pupils. They benefit from

the wide range of resources available to them, supported by a work experience programme for Year 11 pupils and visits to universities by sixth-form pupils.

- 3.14 Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. They thrive in the school, and parents appreciate the support that they receive. Well-qualified and experienced staff monitor pupils identified as having SEND, offering high quality support through individual lessons and specialist help in the classroom. The quality of this provision has resulted in the school gaining accreditation by a national dyslexia agency. Effective provision for the most able provides further challenge through specialist teaching, extension work, and these pupils' participation in mathematics challenges and science competitions.
- 3.15 The range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils of all ages, from the EYFS to the oldest in Year 13, is very wide and is a strength of the school. The extensive choice of enrichment activities includes ballet, yoga, origami and dominos challenges in the primary department, and fashion 'app making' and Christmas cake clubs in the senior school. Provision for sport is wide ranging, with high levels of participation in school sports teams, a karting team, cheerleading troupes and an indoor rowing club. Pupils of all ages benefit from the opportunities provided by drama activities, public speaking and choirs. The inclusive nature of the school encourages pupils to feel confident to take advantage of the many opportunities presented to them.
- 3.16 Most pupils in Year 10 undertake and benefit from the varied demands of the DofE, with many proceeding from bronze to gold awards in three years. A business enterprise scheme is extremely well supported by pupils in Year 12, who rise to the associated challenge well. Keen to be involved in the local community, senior pupils develop their organisational skills by planning and running charity events in support of a hospice, a local food bank and the Royal British Legion.
- 3.17 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, both pupils and their parents appreciated the range and quality of both curricular and extra-curricular provision.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 In the EYFS, staff plan many stimulating creative and practical activities that successfully foster children's ability to investigate and to use their imagination. These activities are enhanced by high quality indoor resources. Staff are well qualified, experienced and very knowledgeable. Interventions are carefully judged for children with SEND or EAL, enabling them to reflect on their learning and refine their skills so that they make excellent progress. The staff have high expectations of all children and frequently challenge them through open-ended questioning and problem-solving opportunities that successfully extend their knowledge and understanding. Information gained through accurate assessments of children's learning and development is used productively to identify their next steps, ensuring that all children make the progress of which they are capable.
- 3.20 Teaching in the primary department and senior school is highly effective in promoting the pupils' progress. The active learning approach in the primary department contributes significantly to the progress made in reading, writing, speaking and listening. At all stages, lessons are characterised by extremely positive relationships between pupils and staff, fulfilling the school's aim to develop

in the pupils an understanding of the value of personal achievement through hard work, intellectual rigour, initiative and goal setting.

- 3.21 Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent; their enthusiasm for their subjects promotes application from pupils, who appreciate the way they help them to learn. Lessons are very well planned, demonstrating a thorough understanding of pupils' needs. Effective questioning of pupils, combined with encouraging comments, ensures that all pupils participate enthusiastically. Lessons are taught at a good pace, demonstrate a variety of approaches, and include assignments geared to pupils' particular needs and abilities. Pupils are very appreciative of the help that they receive outside lesson time.
- 3.22 A wide range of teaching resources is used to support the pupils' learning, including the recently enhanced ICT facilities, employed both as a teaching tool and for pupils to demonstrate their own work, for example through interactive mathematics games in the primary department. Stimulating displays throughout the school celebrate and support the pupils' learning, and encourage further endeavour.
- 3.23 Pupils enjoy using the newly refurbished library, which provides a pleasant and stimulating environment in which to learn. Their close involvement with the plans for this refurbishment has encouraged the pupils to make good use of this resource to enhance their learning.
- 3.24 In all age groups, pupils identified as more able are provided with appropriate challenges. In the most successful teaching, carefully targeted questioning is effective in developing higher order thinking skills in these pupils. In the sixth form, the EPQ offers the opportunity of an extra level of achievement for the most able pupils. The school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection for the most able pupils to be given more challenging tasks. In many lessons, pupils work collaboratively and share their own knowledge and experiences. The ethos of the school ensures that teaching is very effective in promoting tolerance, respect and non-partisan awareness of political issues.
- 3.25 Pupils with SEND are very well supported, both within class and through the learning support department, where high quality tuition enables them to make good progress. Teachers know them very well and provision within lessons for these pupils, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is excellent. Teachers respond appropriately to each individual's needs.
- 3.26 Using cognitive ability tests and its own assessments, the school effectively identifies pupils' individual needs, monitors all pupils' academic progress and sets targets for public examinations. It reviews pupils' progress through detailed and regular analysis of the grades they achieve in their work, and intervention is quickly made to assist those who are not achieving their expected outcomes. Consequently, most pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress.
- 3.27 In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that their homework does not help with their learning. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Inspectors found that homework assignments are appropriate in terms of quantity and regularity, and appropriate to the courses being followed.
- 3.28 At its most effective, marking of work is excellent, providing pupils with regular, constructive feedback as well as targets for improvement; pupils understand and value the feedback they receive. However, this high quality is not seen consistently across all subjects at every stage; some work is marked in a more perfunctory

manner, and corrections of spelling, including subject-specific vocabulary, and grammar are not made in all books.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school fulfils its stated aims fully to develop all pupils' potential within a Christian atmosphere and a caring community, irrespective of their personal faith.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, children co-operate, share and take turns, and show courtesy and respect towards one another, staff and visitors at all times. Children are confident and happy in their work and play, and demonstrate a high level of self-esteem. Purposeful lunch and snack time routines help to foster children's social skills. Children have a high level of awareness of the need for tolerance, enhanced through the celebration of a range of festivals, such as Diwali. Staff actively promote British values. All children are involved in decision making, for example when choosing the focus of the next topic. Children enjoyed the process of democratic voting when deciding whether they wanted to build a den. The highly effective sharing of developmental information between staff in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 ensures that transitions are smooth.
- 4.4 The spiritual development of pupils throughout the school is excellent. The school's core Christian values create an environment in which pupils strive to understand their own spiritual dimension through reflection and by engaging with the lives of others. The pupils' spiritual development is enriched by chapel worship, house assemblies, which they organise and lead with confidence, and projects such as the 'wish tree' initiated by primary department pupils. Other faiths are represented and embraced within the school community, in line with its aims. Pupils think for themselves and develop their spiritual awareness individually, without any emphasis on conforming to a particular path. The school nurtures pupils' sense of identity and self-worth, promoting emotional maturity and self-confidence.
- 4.5 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, and they develop this through activities such as debating and taking part in public speaking. Values of tolerance, understanding and respect are central to the school's ethos. Pupils understand the value of democracy, the rule of law, and the importance of listening to and understanding the reasons for differing viewpoints among citizens. They benefit from discussions within the PSHCCEE programme, visits to hear eminent politicians and mock elections. Pupils understand the significance of charity, both towards those closest to them and those further afield. They enthusiastically organise and support numerous charitable initiatives; these are central to the school's ethos and successes in this area have been recognised at a national level for several years. Senior pupils help to develop the moral sense of younger ones through the example they set.
- 4.6 The social development of pupils is excellent. They are confident and are at ease with adults and one another. Highly articulate from an early age, they willingly and diligently undertake responsibilities in the spirit of moving the school forward. Sixth-form pupils are effective role models for younger pupils and support those new to the school. Pupils benefit greatly from taking on many positions of responsibility and service, such as prefects, school council representatives and form captains. They engage with the local community, for example in an initiative where senior pupils take assemblies in local primary schools. Pupils become politically and economically aware, discussing issues such as wealth and poverty. They

understand the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves, providing harvest boxes for local elderly people and raising funds for a local hospice.

- 4.7 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. Fundamental British values are central to the school's ethos and illustrative posters are prominently displayed. Pupils have an excellent understanding of public institutions and services in England. They embrace cultural diversity, and pupils of different backgrounds co-exist entirely harmoniously. Pupils benefit from their experiences of different cultures, including Western cultural traditions, in music, drama and art within and beyond school. For instance, a link with a local theatre enables many pupils to develop a wider appreciation of Shakespeare. Educational visits in Europe and participation in a project in Tanzania further enhance pupils' understanding of cultures different from their own.
- 4.8 Pupils are noticeably proud of their school community, are excellent ambassadors for it and take advantage of the many opportunities to further their personal development, reaching a high standard in this respect by the time they leave the school.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The EYFS staff successfully provide a homely, nurturing, happy and stimulating environment in which children thrive. Strong relationships are firmly established between children and staff. Very close teamwork and effective staff deployment enable key people and other staff to form lasting relationships with children and their families. All adults consistently work together to promote high standards of behaviour. Children are learning about the importance of healthy eating, for example they are encouraged to make nutritious mealtime choices, including selecting pieces of fruit. They understand the importance of washing their hands at appropriate times. All children are involved in regular exercise, such as when climbing on the outside equipment, an improvement since the previous inspection. Children explore the open spaces in their immediate outdoor environment, and participate in vigorous indoor physical activities in the school hall.
- 4.11 In the primary department and senior school, each pupil is extremely well known and cared for by dedicated tutors, teachers, heads of key educational stages and senior managers, in line with the school's aims. Pastoral care is very well managed at every level, with effective, close liaison between academic and pastoral teams, not least at the point of transition from one key educational stage to the next.
- 4.12 Relationships amongst pupils are excellent. They care for and about one another, and the whole school community has regard for the welfare of its members. Relationships between pupils and staff are also excellent, with staff giving pastoral support willingly and promptly.
- 4.13 The very rare cases of bullying are dealt with promptly, effectively and with great care. Pupils are confident of what to do if an incident occurs. They know that there are many people to whom they can turn for help. Good behaviour is actively promoted in tutor groups, the PSHCCEE programme and the wider curriculum. Throughout the school standards of behaviour are exemplary, and parents commended this in their response to the questionnaire.

- 4.14 Pupils enthusiastically participate in the many opportunities for physical exercise within and beyond the curriculum. They are well educated about the importance of healthy eating and readily take part in meetings about food with the catering manager.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve access for pupils with SEND. These pupils, those with EAL and the most academically able are very well supported pastorally. The school has high aspirations for them and is attentive to all aspects of their well-being.
- 4.16 In their responses to the questionnaires, a few pupils felt that their opinions are not listened to or acted upon. Evidence collected during the inspection does not support this. Pupils themselves spoke of the many opportunities they have to express their views through the primary and senior school councils. They cited instances where improvements have been effected, such as the acquisition of benches and water dispensers, new common room facilities and changes to the PSHCCEE course.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.18 Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are very thorough, in accordance with the school's stated aim to educate pupils in a caring community. Detailed policies meet statutory requirements. Clear procedures for safeguarding pupils and eliminating discrimination are implemented highly effectively. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly, as part of a rigorous recruitment process. Induction of new staff is thorough, and all staff receive appropriate training in child protection at the prescribed intervals. This training includes measures in support of the Government's Prevent strategy, emphasising the importance of protecting pupils of all ages from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. The school has established excellent relations with local welfare and safeguarding agencies, and follows their guidance.
- 4.19 A health and safety committee meets regularly and has recently benefited from the input of representation and expertise from the wider LES group. All staff are trained in first aid, three at the higher level. The medical facilities are appropriate, and the school provides very well for sick or injured pupils and for those with SEND. All visits by pupils reporting that they feel unwell are suitably recorded. Identified pupils, with parents' consent, are allowed to self-medicate for chronic conditions.
- 4.20 Pupils are well educated in e-safety and appropriate use of the internet: their access to the internet at school is filtered. Comprehensive risk assessments cover all areas of the site, as well as activities in and out of school. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. School staff and external consultants carry out tests on fire prevention and fire-fighting equipment at prescribed intervals, and fire practices are held every term.
- 4.21 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored, with a system of immediate response to pupil absence.

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 recently formed governing committee, which includes some members of the former governing body, exercises effective oversight and is wholeheartedly committed to the school's aims and ethos. Its strategic planning group, which meets monthly, has recently produced a wide-ranging and dynamic development plan, which is streamlined and prioritised in accordance with the recommendations of the previous inspection.
- 5.3 Strengths of the governing committee include a diverse range of skills and experience, as well as its ability to draw on support and expertise provided by the governing body and administrative staff of the LES. The committee works closely with the school's senior management, advising, assisting, challenging and collaborating in planning and problem solving. Members take an active interest in the life of the school, frequently visiting informally and attending many events, including open days.
- 5.4 Members of the committee have specific areas of responsibility, including safeguarding and the EYFS, which ensures detailed insight into these aspects of the school. For example, the committee is aware of the need further to develop the outdoor learning environment in the EYFS. Members are diligent and effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety: the committee annually reviews safeguarding policies and the efficiency of their implementation. Its recent safeguarding monitoring report is thorough and detailed. The committee also fulfils its obligations for monitoring financial matters and for investment in staff, premises and resources.
- 5.5 Alert to keeping up to date and to improving their knowledge and understanding, members of the committee regularly attend training courses that pertain to various aspects of governance and regulatory compliance.

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 determined and dedicated leadership and management team is wholly committed to ensuring that the school's values and ethos are successfully upheld. Working collaboratively with staff, pupils and parents, the school's leadership is successful in promoting a culture of high achievement, in terms of the pupils' individual academic and extra-curricular success, and their personal development. Strong, consultative and caring leadership ensures that values of respect for others and for democratic processes are strongly promoted. The school has a clear set of aims, and leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- 5.8 Members of the leadership and management team work purposefully and collaboratively. Their regular meetings deal with strategic matters in addition to day-

to-day issues. Minutes of these meetings are shared with the whole staff, promoting open, inclusive involvement. This inspires in staff a wholehearted commitment to high standards in teaching, the provision of extra-curricular opportunities and the pastoral care provided for their pupils. The accessibility of senior leadership is appreciated by staff, pupils and parents. In their responses to the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents stated that the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence supported this view.

- 5.9 Senior leaders and departmental heads assess the school's provision for its pupils through regular monitoring and observations. These help to support strategic planning and monitor the effectiveness of initiatives, in accordance with the previous inspection recommendation. Since the previous inspection, leadership has implemented a number of initiatives to broaden the range of teaching methods, encouraging pupils to think for themselves and challenging the most able. These include an active learning approach in the primary department and the introduction of the EPQ for Year 13 pupils. Senior managers have developed, and continue to refine, effective procedures for assessing and monitoring individual pupils' progress through regular target setting. This ensures swift intervention when potential underachievement is identified.
- 5.10 A well-organised approach to strategic planning requires all those with managerial responsibilities to evaluate their work and prioritise future actions. Senior leaders delegate responsibility to middle managers effectively; they are accountable for the performance of their pastoral or academic areas. Staff appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the strategic development of the school through their own departmental plans. The school's five-year development plan is extremely detailed and ambitious, with clear targets, success criteria and projected completion dates.
- 5.11 The school recruits well-qualified staff, and all required checks are implemented for them and for governors. A thorough induction programme ensures that newly appointed staff are fully trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and this training is regularly updated. Clear handbooks identify the school's aims, procedures and expectations. An effective staff appraisal system, which includes lesson observation and feedback, identifies further areas for professional development for individual staff and departments. Staff avail themselves of the many opportunities on offer to attend training courses, both at the school and provided by external agencies. In addition, EYFS staff benefit from one-to-one professional supervision sessions. Leaders of key educational stages meet regularly to review the well-being and progress of pupils, which contributes further to the school's excellent pastoral care. Strong co-ordination between the primary department and senior school ensures a smooth transition and continuity of education as pupils progress through the school.
- 5.12 In the EYFS, as elsewhere, children's well-being and safeguarding are of paramount importance, and they are educated in a nurturing environment. Staff effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of the educational programmes in all areas of learning, including promoting British values. An accurate self-evaluation process provides a secure basis for planning improvements to the EYFS, which sets out clear strengths and areas to further develop. Staff have identified the need to develop the outdoor learning environment. Since the previous inspection, they have made good progress in addressing the recommendations regarding further opportunities for children to develop their investigation and problem-solving skills and providing them with more challenging climbing opportunities.

- 5.13 Excellent links have been established with EYFS children's parents, who are well informed about their children's achievements and progress, and are encouraged to share their own observations from home. This enables appropriate interventions. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the work of the EYFS, particularly through the celebration of festivals and topic-based activities.
- 5.14 In the primary department and senior school, excellent links with parents, carers and guardians benefit the pupils' all-round education. In their responses to the questionnaire, all parents expressed satisfaction with the range of subjects and areas of experience offered and with the quality of care provided, and indicated that their children are happy and feel safe at school. A very small minority were critical of the range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection findings did not support this view: inspectors found that the school provides an extensive variety of extra-curricular opportunities for all pupils. The school actively seeks parents' views through its own focused questionnaires, often linked to a particular theme, such as the school's reporting system. This enables parents to influence the work of the school and to make improvements. The school operates an 'open door' policy; staff are very accessible and willing to listen to parents. Any concerns raised are logged and handled in a sensitive manner, leading to a timely resolution, and in accordance with the school's published procedures.
- 5.15 Parents have access to a comprehensive range of information about the work of the school. Parents of prospective pupils receive a detailed brochure that highlights the aims and ethos of the school. A wide range of up-to-date information is accessible on the school's website, including detailed and informative weekly newsletters, which raise parents' awareness of key dates and events. Through a dedicated email system, parents receive prompt and regular information from the school. Parents are well informed of their children's learning and development through interim and full reports, parents' evenings and informal meetings with teachers. The reports contain encouraging and detailed comments, all linked to specific learning areas and including advice for further improvement.
- 5.16 The flourishing parents' association is actively involved in the work of the school through a wide range of fund-raising and social events. Pupils benefit greatly from these initiatives through the purchase of items such as a new sound system and new equipment for the EYFS. The overwhelming majority of parents stated in questionnaire responses that they would recommend the school to another parent.

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