



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

DOLPHIN SCHOOL LLP

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Dolphin School LLP

Full Name of School	Dolphin School LLP
DfE Number	872/6010
Address	Dolphin School LLP Waltham Road Hurst Berkshire RG10 0FR England
Telephone Number	0118 934 1277
Fax Number	0118 934 4110
Email Address	omnes@dolphinschool.com
Head	Mr Tom Lewis
Proprietor	Dolphin School LLP
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	205
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (110 boys; 95 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 40 5-11: 130 11-13: 35
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Jane Robinson
EYFS Gender	Boys and Girls
Inspection Dates	19 Jan 2016 to 22 Jan 2016

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 January 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.

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 chair of the advisory board, 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

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting Inspector
Mr Marcus Culverwell	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Timothy Smith	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Morgan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	9
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	10
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	12
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Dolphin School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the ages of 3 to 13. Situated in rural Berkshire, in the village of Hurst, it was founded in 1970 as a Montessori Nursery school. The school is owned by a limited liability partnership (LLP). A board of advisors liaises between the LLP and the headmaster, who joined the school in January 2015. Since the previous inspection, the role of the board of advisors has been formalised and their number has recently increased. An Elizabethan manor house forms a distinctive backdrop for the teaching accommodation.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment in which to develop caring, independent-thinking, confident and well-balanced young people. It seeks to promote high academic standards, by encouraging curiosity and inspiring a lifelong love of learning, and by identifying and nurturing the talents of every pupil, celebrating their individuality. The school provides an extensive field and walking trip programme both at home and abroad, endeavouring to bring education to life by taking it beyond the classroom.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 205 pupils on the roll, including 40 in the EYFS. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist learning support. There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), and individual support is provided when required.
- 1.4 Pupils come from professional and business families living in towns and villages within the locality. The majority are of white British origin, the remainder coming from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average. Pupils transfer to a wide range of independent and maintained day schools. Most leave at age thirteen; a small minority move at the age of eleven.
- 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 The school is very successful in fulfilling its aims. Throughout the school, pupils gain good standards of knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their ages and abilities. Children in the EYFS make excellent progress from their starting points. Pupils' achievements are enhanced by their highly positive and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. They benefit from an excellent and wide-ranging curriculum. This includes an introduction to a range of languages in the EYFS and innovative subjects, such as earth studies, for older pupils, as well as an extensive programme of day and residential visits, including walking trips. Teaching, which is good overall, promotes the pupils' good progress and successfully encourages their curiosity and interest. Most teaching is well planned. In a few lessons activities are not consistently matched to the learning needs of pupils with SEND or the most able, and assessment information is not consistently used to support this process. Measures have been initiated to develop further the monitoring of teaching across all age groups and subjects, which was a recommendation at the previous inspection. These are not fully embedded as senior leaders have insufficient time to monitor their implementation.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They are notably tolerant, kind and emotionally mature for their age. In the EYFS the key person system ensures that children form strong relationships and provides a reassuring link between school and home. Across the school, high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves are supported by the strong family feeling within the school community. Excellent arrangements for pastoral care promote the well-being and good behaviour of pupils. The school pays good attention to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and gives safeguarding high priority. Although a few recruitment checks were not completed in a timely manner in the past, the school now has a recruitment policy that meets current requirements, whose correct implementation it has demonstrated in recent appointments.
- 2.3 The recently re-constituted advisory board brings good expertise and strong commitment to its governance responsibilities, since all members have close links with the school. Training to assist advisors in monitoring their regulatory responsibilities is at an early stage of development. Good leadership and management of the school are characterised by strong and supportive teamwork. Many recent initiatives, and the re-defining of leadership roles, set a clear direction for the school's future development. These are not fully implemented. The recommendations of the previous inspection for the EYFS have been met, and for the rest of the school partly addressed. There is now a consistent approach to curriculum planning. Reports do not consistently set specific targets for future learning. Parents are strongly positive in their support for the school and the education and care it provides.

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. Provide senior leaders with more time to undertake their management and administrative responsibilities.
2. Ensure that information from assessment is used consistently to match work in class to differing abilities.
3. Ensure that teaching across the school matches that of the best by the consistent monitoring and sharing of good practice.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Throughout the school pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to promote high academic standards. They have good standards of knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their ages and abilities. Almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were pleased with their child's progress and all the pupils felt that they are making good progress with their work.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children are active and enthusiastic learners who fully engage in the wide range of activities. They achieve well in all areas of learning, making excellent progress in relation to their starting points, and most reach at least the expected levels of development for their age. By the end of Reception, most children have achieved the Early Learning Goals and many have exceeded these. Children in Reception count to 100 confidently and order numbers to 20. They understand the concepts of more and less and the difference between two numbers. Younger children enjoy exploring numbers, shapes and measures and developing their mathematical knowledge through the wide-ranging resources and challenging activities provided. A high priority is given to the development of language skills, and children of all ages show mature levels of understanding and use of vocabulary. They express their thoughts and ideas articulately and listen respectfully to those of their peers. Children are active learners and critical thinkers. They are keen to ask questions and explore the world in which they live, as was observed in a Nursery science lesson where children were able to make predictions and draw their own conclusions about reversible and irreversible changes. Reception children are secure in their knowledge of phonic sounds and readily apply them in both reading and writing activities. They read simple texts fluently and are keen to practise their emerging writing skills when labelling their drawings and writing stories.
- 3.4 From Year 1 onwards, pupils are highly articulate and able to express their views clearly. They listen carefully to their teachers and respect others' right to express differing opinions from their own. Pupils demonstrate the capacity for logical reasoning in many subjects. They enjoy reading, and many read fluently for their age. They demonstrate proficient literacy skills in writing for a range of purposes and their written work is generally well presented, using well-formed handwriting. As they grow older pupils develop strong mathematical competency, which they apply successfully in a range of subjects such as geography and science, as well as in mathematical investigations. Pupils demonstrate good computing skills that range from understanding how algorithms work to control a remotely controlled toy in Year 1 to using coding to design applications for mobile phones in Year 8. They apply these successfully to support and enhance their work across the curriculum. Due to the many opportunities for practical investigation in science, pupils display strong scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils produce attractive artwork that showcases their creativity. Their physical abilities are well developed in a range of team sports and dance, as well as in the extensive opportunities they have for outdoor learning.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve well in a wide range of extra-curricular areas. School teams enjoy a good measure of success in local fixtures and individual pupils have played at regional and national level in a range of sports. Pupils not only take part regularly in school productions but on several occasions have also performed successfully at the

Edinburgh Fringe festival. They develop musical performance skills in frequent concerts and the biennial house music competitions. Pupils have won national short story writing competitions and are regularly successful in national mathematics challenges.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests. However results in standardised tests in English and mathematics indicate that attainment in these subjects is higher than national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence gained from scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and pupil interviews confirms this judgement. Each year several gain awards to their senior schools, whilst others gain entry to academically selective schools. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils of all abilities make good progress in relation to those of similar ability. Pupils with SEND and EAL make good progress in relation to their difficulties and starting points, as demonstrated by improvement in their spelling, reading and written work. The most able pupils also make good progress, due to enrichment and stimulation offered in extra-curricular activities and the additional challenge they receive in some lessons.
- 3.7 Across the school, pupils demonstrate highly positive and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. They participate well in collaborative activities and show excellent concentration and perseverance whether working alone or in a group. Their good behaviour in class contributes to purposeful working and their progress is well supported by excellent relationships with their teachers.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The educational programmes provide children in the EYFS with opportunities to play and explore in all seven areas of learning, through an appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, which exploit both indoor and outside learning resources effectively. Rigorous planning ensures the needs and interests of all children are met through individually targeted next steps. The older and more able children are progressively introduced to a more structured timetable as they move through the Reception year, and all children are well prepared for the transition to the next stage in their education. Specialist teaching, in music for all EYFS children and physical education (PE) for Reception, enhances provision. Lessons in a range of modern foreign languages provide opportunities for children to explore a wide variety of languages and cultures and to develop their geographic knowledge. Children in Nursery have a weekly judo lesson and older children are offered judo as an extra-curricular activity. The programme for trips, which is a significant and distinctive feature of the school, begins in Nursery; children experience outings to woodlands, farms, theatres, museums, garages and garden centres, using different modes of transport. These visits link to the children's learning in school and develop their curiosity whilst enriching their knowledge alongside their personal, social and emotional skills.
- 3.10 In Years 1 to 8 the broad curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and successfully supports the aims of the school. The range of subjects offered ensures that pupils at all stages are given learning experiences which fulfil their academic potential and successfully nurture their personal development. In addition to the subjects of the National Curriculum, the programme includes swimming, drama and French. Mandarin is introduced in Year 5, and Spanish from Year 7. Classics is taught from Year 3 as preparation for Latin in Year 4. In Year 1, pupils have

specialist teachers for French, music and PE and by Year 3 they are taught by subject specialists for most lessons. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported by individual help from the learning support department, which provides teachers with strategies to help pupils in class. Extra-curricular activities such as science, programming, mathematical and technical drawing, music groups and debating clubs offer additional challenge to more able pupils who are sometimes given extension activities in lessons.

- 3.11 The effectiveness of the current curriculum model is reviewed regularly by senior leaders. Since the previous inspection, the timetable has been adjusted to enable more time for the core curriculum and the introduction of earth studies. This subject embraces many disciplines such as philosophy, mythology, globalisation and spirituality. It links with the trips programme and allows exploration of many areas attached to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme covers a range of suitable issues and topics that enable pupils to explore the meaning of British values and how they are practised within the school community and across local and national contexts. Care is taken to ensure that pupils are presented with a balance of political views. Since the previous inspection the school has been divided into lower, middle and upper school sections. Heads of section have begun the process of amending curriculum documentation to strengthen further continuity and consistency across the school, thus addressing the recommendation made at that time.
- 3.12 In addition to a wide-range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, such as cookery, choirs, drama, sports, creative activities and board games, the school provides an excellent and extensive extra-curricular programme. This consists of day and residential trips that begin in the EYFS and culminate with a residential outdoor pursuits walking trip in the Alps in Year 8. These walking trips are a distinct feature and support the ethos and aims of the school highly effectively. Through the extensive range of walking challenges, pupils are enabled to test their limits in emotional, intellectual and physical terms, and develop their knowledge and understanding by experiencing at first hand many topics covered in the taught curriculum. In the questionnaire, almost all agreed that they find the extra-curricular programme a highlight of their time at school. All the parents who responded were happy with the range of subjects offered and a vast majority with the range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.13 The curriculum is well supported by links with the community. Visiting speakers enrich the academic and pastoral elements of the taught curriculum. For example a recent speaker delivered a series of workshops for pupils, parents and staff on e-safety and how to respond to cyber-bullying. The pupils in Year 8 present an assembly to the whole school on a number of charities, one of which the school votes to support for the year. They are also encouraged to respond to international events and organise fundraising activities for the victims of international disasters. The recently introduced *Delphic Challenge* scheme provides opportunities for pupils to undertake a range of community service tasks such as reading to the elderly or playing music for them, along with community fundraising activities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 In the EYFS, the highly committed staff team works collaboratively, using their range of expertise and experience effectively to ensure that children are well motivated and supported. Staff know the children extremely well and through continuous observations and on-going informal assessments, plan challenging learning experiences which enable the children to make rapid progress. Effective use of questioning encourages the children to develop their thinking and reasoning skills and ensures they experience a sense of achievement and success. Children respond positively to the high expectations of their teachers and demonstrate enthusiasm and joy in all they do. Staff use resources well, such as to assist children in Nursery to gain an understanding of India and the Hindi language or Reception children to acquire a knowledge of phonics. A dedicated member of staff oversees provision for children with additional needs, liaising with parents, colleagues and external agencies in order to ensure that each child's specific needs are met effectively.
- 3.16 Across the school, a significant proportion of teaching is good or excellent, strongly promoting the school's aims. It is characterised by excellent subject knowledge, which gives breadth to lessons and stimulates pupils' interest, extends their thinking and promotes general knowledge. The integration of an extremely wide range of educational visits and residential trips not only broadens pupils' experiences, building tolerance and respect for ways of living different to their own, but also promotes insightful discussions. In the questionnaire, all the pupils agreed that their work is interesting and that the teachers help them learn.
- 3.17 Throughout the school, teaching engenders an atmosphere of enthusiastic inquisitiveness. Teachers have high expectations and instil confidence in pupils, encouraging them to ask questions and to undertake independent research. Much teaching is well planned and structured; lessons are well paced and constantly move learning forward. Teachers encourage the pupils to persevere and use highly effective questioning to stimulate discussion and check understanding. They successfully promote tolerance and respect, and are non-partisan in their coverage of political views. Behaviour management is strong, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and therefore ensuring active pupil participation. Resources are mostly chosen carefully to stimulate interest and cater for different learning styles. The well-resourced lessons promote a tangible excitement to learn and include a variety of activities, which engage pupils' interest, allow for collaborative working and the expansion of group ideas. Information and communication technology is used to bring another dynamic layer to learning. In a few lessons, planning is not tailored to individual needs and teaching relies on teacher instruction, precluding opportunities for independent and collaborative working.
- 3.18 The school has taken steps to address the recommendation from the previous inspection; that the quality of teaching be rigorously monitored to ensure all pupils are given tasks that are well matched to their needs. The new leadership has initiated systems and re-defined management roles to pursue greater consistency. However, these measures are at an early stage and senior leaders have insufficient time to rigorously monitor their implementation. Consequently, practice is inconsistent. Pupils with SEND and EAL are well supported in individual and group sessions. Although teachers in timetabled lessons are aware of their needs and helpful strategies are suggested by the learning support department, activities in

some lessons are not consistently matched to individual abilities. In the questionnaire, a small minority of parents did not feel that very able pupils receive appropriate support. Inspection evidence confirmed that, whilst more able pupils are provided with suitable extension activities and focused questioning that extend their thinking skills and creativity in many lessons, this is not consistently the case.

- 3.19 The school has a clear marking policy, which is supplemented by subject department guidelines. Where adhered to, the policy is effective in supporting and guiding pupils to understand how to improve their work. However, the application of the policy is inconsistent, as noted during the previous inspection; some marking is perfunctory and in a few cases work was not marked. There is a broad range of assessment systems in place to measure pupils' progress against national expectations and to produce standardised data. The school uses this data to track the progress of individuals and cohorts of pupils. This is not consistently used to help plan activities matched to the needs of all pupils. Teachers discuss information from assessment at regular meetings to ensure that pupils maintain expected progress and reach predicted levels of attainment.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 In the EYFS, children's personal development is excellent. Expectations regarding behaviour are clearly communicated to the children and an effective system of rewards and praise offers positive reinforcement. Children readily share, co-operate and wait patiently for their turn. Desirable personal attributes are promoted in weekly assemblies, such as when the qualities of friendship are explored through stories and songs and children share and celebrate their own personal achievements, as well as those of their peers. British values are promoted through teaching adherence to the Early Years' 'Golden Rules', which focus on making good choices and co-operating with one another. Children are rewarded for exceptional acts of kindness by adding a golden leaf to the trees displayed in the classrooms. Children develop an understanding of other faiths and cultures through the celebration of festivals, the provision of appropriate resources and discovering facts about different countries in modern foreign languages lessons. Strong links and communication between colleagues across the school promote an easy transition for children into the next stage in their education.
- 4.3 The school is highly effective in providing a clear framework for the personal development of pupils in Years 1 to 8, so that pupils' personal qualities are extremely well developed. Pupils are confident, articulate and emotionally mature for their ages. Individuality is encouraged, and yet pupils demonstrate high levels of support and care for one another, listening to one another's point of view and showing respect and consideration. Their self-esteem is strong. They understand the importance of faith in the lives of many people in their school, wider communities and around the world. Pupils draw upon their experiences during residential trips to understand the awe and wonder of something greater than themselves, such as when sitting around a campfire in the countryside. Pupils demonstrate respect for a range of human faiths and beliefs and understand the importance of inclusion, tolerance and kindness for all. This is exemplified by talks given by parents from different faiths to pupils in the school, and an assembly about the Quaker principle of not saying things that are unkind, unhelpful or unnecessary.
- 4.4 Pupils have a well-developed moral understanding. A sense of responsibility and politeness is promoted and pupils look after one another and clearly understand right from wrong. Their conduct and behaviour is generally excellent. In many lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect on ethical issues so that they develop a strong sense of fair play and an awareness of gaining a balanced view in an argument. Pupils demonstrate concern for those less fortunate than themselves; for example those in Years 4 to 8 organise a charity fair each year and the school has an active link with a primary school in Rwanda.
- 4.5 Pupils' excellent social development, demonstrated in the high levels of mutual respect shown between all members of the community is strongly supported by the family feel that exists within the school. They are socially mature as a result of taking responsibility such as paired reading between older and younger pupils, being playground ambassadors and the independence gained from residential trips which start in Year 3. By participation in the *Delphic Challenge* pupils engage in social action such as collecting clothes for refugees or performing in residential homes. Every pupil from Year 4 has the opportunity to sit on the school council; this promotes most effectively understanding, responsibility for others and the

importance of discussion in reaching conclusions about what is best for the school community.

- 4.6 The pupils demonstrate an extremely well-developed awareness of other cultures, as well as western traditions gained through PSHEE and earth studies. Their direct insight into aspects of British cultural history and the cultures of others in the community and around the world is promoted highly effectively by visits from family members, who talk about subjects such as their experience in World War II, why Sikhs wear a turban and Diwali. Pupils have a good first-hand knowledge about English public services and institutions, promoted through a visit from a member of parliament and regular visits from community police officers, which reinforce their learning about government and the rule of civil and criminal law. Pupils' understanding of British values can be seen through special events such as days given over to peace and democracy, where learning about British democracy and the acceptance of others' viewpoints is emphasised.
- 4.7 The pupils reach an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school. In the questionnaire a very large majority of parents felt that they are happy and most pupils like being at the school.

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

- 4.8 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.9 The warm, welcoming environment of the EYFS ensures each day starts happily and positively. The key person system ensures that children form strong relationships and provides a reassuring link between school and home. Independence is encouraged through sensitive support offered by all staff to develop confidence and build self-esteem. Nursery children are provided with a nutritious hot lunch that is prepared and served to them by the staff who supervise meal times, promoting independence, good manners and healthy eating. Reception pupils bring a packed lunch to school and parents are offered advice regarding healthy food options, which is reinforced with the children through topic work. During PE lessons, children learn about healthy lifestyles, the importance of exercise and how this affects their body.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, staff provide excellent pastoral support and guidance for pupils. The school has introduced a system of communication notes that are used to record incidents, observations and concerns and then transferred to and tracked on the school's database. This ensures efficient communication between the whole staff and enables trends to be promptly identified, informing regular discussion about pupils of concern. Leaders oversee pupils' holistic development, together with a mentoring system which complements the support provided by form teachers, effectively promoting strong pastoral care. Assemblies and PSHEE lessons, in which pupils explore a range of social themes, strongly reinforce pastoral messages. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and positive. Pupils are openly supportive of each other, recognise the individual strengths and attributes of their peers and seek to help them when necessary.
- 4.11 Pupils are made aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of healthy eating. The school does not provide meals for pupils, other than in Nursery, so they are encouraged to bring nutritious and varied food in their packed lunches. Lunch times are monitored by teaching staff, who eat alongside the pupils. Regular opportunities for sport in PE and games remind pupils of the need for exercise.

- 4.12 Measures to promote good behaviour and to address bullying, including cyber-bullying are effective. In the questionnaire a small minority of pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the fairness of rewards and sanctions. Older pupils explained to inspectors their view that it is harder for senior pupils to earn rewards and that sanctions are awarded for minor offences. Scrutiny of behavioural records indicates that sanctions are not awarded prolifically and that serious disciplinary incidents are extremely rare. The leadership maintains oversight of behavioural incidents and sanctions to identify trends. Younger pupils gain certificates and older children book tokens by accumulating 'strides' which are awarded for good effort, work and behaviour. Inspectors concluded that, whilst the system is fair, staff are not consistently successful in communicating their praise and appreciation of senior pupils' efforts.
- 4.13 In the questionnaire, a very small minority of parents and a small minority of pupils raised concerns about the school's handling of bullying. Inspectors viewed records of bullying incidents and confirmed that they are infrequent, recorded correctly and that sanctions involve discussion with all parties in order that perpetrators understand the seriousness of their behaviour. Records indicate that incidents have not re-occurred. In interviews pupils confirmed that they generally get on well with each other and that bullying is rare. They said that staff are pro-active in maintaining positive relationships between pupils and that any unkind behaviour is effectively dealt with.
- 4.14 The school seeks the views of pupils through a school council, which meets every week. Pupils elect a form representative who brings issues for discussion and action. In the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that the school does not listen or respond to their views. Inspectors found that information about the school council is displayed on a prominent notice board and representatives give feedback to classes in PSHEE lessons.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to enhance its provision and access for disabled pupils and those with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.17 In the EYFS, great care and attention is given to health and safety routines. Robust systems ensure that children are carefully supervised at all times. Children understand the rules for moving safely around the site and listen carefully to adults when instructions are being given. Vigilant arrangements for arrival and collection at the end of the day ensure a safe and happy handover of children, as well as allowing time for informal communication between parents and staff.
- 4.18 Across the school, including in the EYFS, arrangements to safeguard pupils and promote their well-being are given high priority. The safeguarding policy conforms to the most recent regulatory requirements and reflects the school's commitment to keeping pupils safe and resilient to extremist views. Staff receive regular training so that they are well aware of their responsibilities and what action they must take if they have a concern, and the school liaises appropriately with local agencies. In the past a few recruitment checks were not completed in a timely manner. However the school has amended its recruitment policy so that it clearly indicates correct procedures, which it has applied to recent appointments.
- 4.19 The welfare of staff and pupils is well promoted through the efficient implementation of the comprehensive health and safety policy. Measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards are thorough and well organised. The school ensures that equipment and facilities are checked and maintained carefully and that staff are trained in safe working practices. Fire drills are carried out termly to ensure that pupils understand evacuation procedures. Risk assessments for the many off-site visits, as well as different areas of the school's operation, are consistently robust. There are sufficient numbers of staff trained in first aid, including in paediatric first aid. Medical facilities are suitable, and the procedures to care for pupils who fall ill or hurt themselves are thorough and well documented.
- 4.20 The admission and attendance registers are completed carefully and stored for the required period. Unexplained absence is followed up promptly.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 A board of advisors helps the proprietors oversee the school's work. The advisors all have a long association and strong commitment to the school, as former pupils, staff or current parents. The founding proprietor meets with the leadership regularly. These governance arrangements, which are based on a strong understanding of the school's ethos, provide effective oversight of all aspects of the school's work. The proprietors exercise prudent financial control, which includes thorough discussion with the advisors and the leadership to ensure that staffing and educational resources support the school's wide-ranging curriculum well and that the accommodation is suitably maintained.
- 5.3 The advisory board meets at least twice each term to gain insight into the school's operation, act as a sounding board for the leadership and to discuss strategic matters. The board works with the leadership to discuss and ratify plans for future improvement. Advisors are well placed to monitor the school's work informally because they visit the school regularly and are well known and accessible to the staff and many of the parents. Although no member of the advisory board has specific responsibility for EYFS issues, the board as a whole takes an active interest; for example an advisor regularly hears children in Reception read. The proprietors are in frequent contact with the chair of the board and receive minutes of advisors' meetings to ensure they are well informed.
- 5.4 The role of the advisory board in providing governance has been strengthened recently. Clear terms of reference have been established and additional advisors, who bring a broader range of experience and skills, have been appointed. It is beginning to impact on standards in all areas. Advisors are aware that they lack sufficient specialist knowledge to inform them in monitoring the regulatory aspects of their responsibilities, so they have sought advice from external consultants and joined a professional association in order to undertake relevant training. Advisors discharge their responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety conscientiously by regularly reviewing school policies with the leadership. The proprietors conduct the annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures in accordance with statutory requirements through an effective scrutiny of the school's procedures.

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 good.
- 5.6 Leaders and managers in the EYFS are fully aware of their responsibilities in overseeing the learning and development requirements and rigorously monitor all aspects of regulatory compliance. All staff understand policies and procedures and ensure they are implemented consistently. On joining the school, they receive appropriate training in safeguarding, health, welfare and safety issues, which is regularly updated. In addition, continuous professional development is promoted through school training days and attendance at local authority and other external

meetings and courses. Appraisals offer further support for staff to enhance their practice. A system for regular supervisory meetings is not formally established. The recommendations at the previous inspection to develop strategic leadership to implement an effective system of self-evaluation and to create an action plan for the future development of EYFS, have been met. All members of staff have the opportunity to reflect on current practice and to contribute their experience and expertise to ambitious plans for enhancing and enriching the educational provision and programmes for the future. There has been a restructuring of the management team and redefining roles and responsibilities. However, the head of the EYFS has limited time for management and administrative tasks.

- 5.7 The senior leadership team of the school is effective in enabling it to secure its aims by demonstrating a strong impetus for improvement that reflects the school's ethos of innovation in order to bring education to life. The leadership's drive is clearly shared with the staff, who express positive support for the new initiatives. These have been introduced following extensive staff consultation and self-evaluation to identify priorities for development. This thorough groundwork is steering the formulation of a comprehensive five-year plan for future school improvement. The recent nature of the changes has meant that some recommendations of the previous inspections have only partially been met.
- 5.8 The leadership has redefined the roles of senior managers to ensure they are an accurate reflection of their responsibilities and to provide clear focus within the school community. The school has been separated into sections, each with a leader, with the aim of strengthening consistency and continuity in teaching and learning appropriate to each age group. Senior leaders are well supported by heads of subject departments who support other staff in developing their subject knowledge and skills. Departmental action plans, arising from self-evaluation, sit alongside that of the whole school. The well-organised management structure is recently established and its effectiveness in terms of improvements to consistency in teaching and outcomes for pupils is therefore not fully developed. Senior leaders have limited time in which to monitor the implementation of new initiatives and the quality of teaching.
- 5.9 Senior leaders fulfil their responsibilities for pupils' welfare, health and safety efficiently. They ensure that all school staff undertake training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety at the required intervals. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Although prior to the inspection a few key policies did not have full regard to regulatory guidance, this did not have a negative impact on the pupils' well-being and they were promptly amended.
- 5.10 Senior leaders ensure that, in their collegial approach to management, values of tolerance and respect, which generate a strong sense of teamwork, are promoted throughout the school community. Arrangements for staff appraisal are thorough and produce objectives that further individual professional development and school improvement as well as identifying any training needed to secure them. Staff are encouraged to undertake additional training, information from which is shared with their colleagues to widen its impact. New staff undergo a thorough induction which covers key policies and procedures and are supported by a mentor.
- 5.11 The school maintains excellent links with parents, carers and guardians. All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with the opportunities offered to be involved in school life and the learning experiences of the children. They are actively encouraged to share any special skills and knowledge

they may have and additionally, to join groups of children on the many trips and outings that are integral to the school's curricular provision. Frequent workshops and information meetings, which often include outside speakers, are organised to further develop parents' knowledge of their children's educational experiences, as well as dealing with topics such as e-safety and moving onto senior schools. Any concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the school's published complaints policy.

- 5.12 Parents are kept abreast of news and events in the school through a weekly email that includes notes from the head, celebrations of pupils' achievements and a calendar of forthcoming events. Additionally, the head writes to parents at the beginning of each term, informing them of relevant developments within the school, and at the end of each term, reflecting on all that has happened. The annually produced school magazine, *The Delphic Oracle*, provides an excellent photographic record of school life.
- 5.13 Before joining the school, parents and children have opportunities to visit as appropriate to their age and stage in their education. They are well prepared through meetings with staff, the parent handbook and the school's website, all of which provide particularly helpful information. The parents' association is extremely active and supported by parents across the whole school. Their role is to promote the strong community spirit through a range of social and fund-raising events. Twice each term they also provide hot lunches for the children, which are extremely popular.
- 5.14 The recommendation at the previous inspection to ensure that reports to parents contain more information about the progress of their children and set specific and meaningful targets for future learning, has been partially addressed. In the EYFS, parents receive clear information regarding their child's progress every term, and the setting establishes a strong partnership with parents. In the rest of the school, communication between parents and teachers is frequent, through regular parents' evenings, interim summaries of effort and achievement, and the ready availability of staff and the head. Annual written reports, however, vary in the detail about individual progress and are inconsistent in clearly explaining what pupils need to do in order to improve their work.

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