



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	<b>St Joseph's School</b>
DfE Number	<b>892/6003</b>
EYFS Number	<b>254641</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1003916</b>
Address	<b>St Joseph's School 33 Derby Road Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG1 5AW</b>
Telephone Number	<b>0115 9418356</b>
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Email Address	<b>office@st-josephs.nottingham.sch.uk</b>
Head teacher	<b>Mrs Paula Hemsley</b>
Chair of Trustees	<b>Acting Chair Mr Jinder Boora</b>
Age Range	<b>1 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>123</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (77 boys; 46 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 21    5-11: 29 3-5 (EYFS): 73</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total: 123</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Elizabeth Boyer</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>06 Mar 2012 to 09 Mar 2012</b>

## **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 a Trustees' representative, 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 Graham Nunn

Mr John Connor

Mr Chris Manville

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA School)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was May 2008.

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) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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<sup>st</sup> 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 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.

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

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(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	5
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	8
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	10
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>13</b>
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14

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

- 1.1 St Joseph's School is an independent co-educational preparatory day school for pupils aged between 12 months and 11 years of age. It was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1934. In 1990 they relinquished their day-to-day control, and the running of the school became the responsibility of a charitable trust with a board of trustees. In 2003 the school became totally independent of the Sisters and a new board of trustees was appointed. The school is situated in the centre of Nottingham, next door to St Barnabas' Cathedral.
- 1.2 Children may join the nursery at the age of 12 months, where they remain until they are four and then move into the reception class for their final year in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils then join the infant section of the school before transferring to the junior section at the age of seven. Since the previous inspection in 2008, the age of entry for children has been reduced from 18 months to 12 months and the property has been purchased from the Sisters of Mercy. A new part-time head teacher was appointed in January 2012.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a positive, optimum environment which will develop the skills and attitudes required for children to be effective lifelong learners. In addition the school has high expectations for every child. Through its Christian ethos, it seeks to encourage all pupils to love, respect and understand themselves, others and the multi-faith world in which they live.
- 1.4 The school caters for 123 pupils between the ages of 12 months and 11. Fifty-three of these attend part-time in the nursery classes. A further 41 children attend classes in the EYFS, 33 of whom are part-time. Thirteen pupils (9 boys and 4 girls) are in Years 1 and 2 and 16 pupils (14 boys and 2 girls) are in Years 3 to 6.
- 1.5 Pupils come from a wide area, many travelling significant distances into the city. The majority of pupils come from homes that have varied socio-economic circumstances with parents working predominantly in business in the city and some in professional occupations. More than half of the pupils come from families of ethnic minorities. This diversity reflects the nature of the local community.
- 1.6 Nine pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and are supported by the school in their learning of English. Thirteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Eight receive additional support from the school. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The ability profile of the school is judged to be in line with the national average, although there is a broad spread of ability within that overall judgement. At the age of 11, most pupils transfer to senior independent schools in the local area, with a smaller proportion going into the maintained sector. In 2011 almost all pupils went to their first choice school with a number gaining scholarships or bursaries.
- 1.7 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 St Joseph's School fulfils its aims adequately overall. Pupils' achievements are sound and their attitudes to learning are good. All pupils make sound progress, with some making good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across the areas of the curriculum. Such progress is largely the result of the sound and, on occasions, good quality of teaching they receive. They are articulate and use their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately in different subjects. The use of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills is sound and adequately used. Pupils' creativity is good and they reason and investigate for themselves with enthusiasm when given the opportunity. The pupils' behaviour is good as also are their attitudes to learning. The broad and largely balanced curriculum, together with a good range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits, support pupils' learning well. Subject documentation lacks a systematic format to enable the school to monitor the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding during the time they are at the school.
- 2.2 In many cases, pupils with SEND and EAL make sound progress in their lessons as a result of being given individual work appropriate to their needs. However, the current level of overall co-ordination and monitoring of provision for pupils with SEND, or who are gifted and talented, is not sufficiently strong and inhibits the amount of progress that they make.
- 2.3 Pupils' personal development is good and supported by effective arrangements for their pastoral care and their welfare, health and safety. Pupils respect each other and work well together in many areas of school life. They are able to reflect on the non-material aspects of their lives and show great compassion for those in the world community who are less fortunate than themselves by fund-raising for a wide variety of charities. Appropriate checks are carried out for any health and safety issues, risk assessments are detailed and the safeguarding of pupils is robust.
- 2.4 Governance is unsatisfactory overall. The trustees do not have appropriate insight into the working of the school and are not sufficiently effective in exercising their monitoring role and in providing support, challenge and stimulus for the school's growth and improvement. Trustees keep themselves adequately informed and now work well with the head teacher to plan the development of the school. Satisfactory strategic planning and that for school improvement are in place but are short term. The school recognises that more detailed planning over a longer period of time is necessary. The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory overall. Since January 2012, suitable strategies have been put in place to address many issues but have had insufficient time to make an impact on raising pupils' achievement levels or rate of progress. Monitoring of the quality of the teaching and learning and overall performance of the school is unsatisfactory. Policies have been recently reviewed and are implemented appropriately by staff. Links with parents are good and they are generally happy with their involvement with the school, although some expressed concern with the leadership and management of the school.

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

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

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

- 2.5 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that the admission register is kept in accordance with the Education (Pupils Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 [Part 3, paragraph 17, under welfare, health and safety];
  - ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, having regard to regulation 5 of the School Premises Regulations [Part 5, paragraph 23 (k)];
  - ensure that there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration [Part 5, paragraph 23 (p)]
- 2.6 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three

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

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the new leadership and management defines roles and responsibilities to enable trustees, senior managers and subject leaders to carry out their roles more effectively.
  2. Establish an effective system for monitoring the work of the school.
  3. Ensure each subject is planned to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a progressive way.
  4. Improve the level of support for pupils with SEND as well as for those who are gifted and talented.
  5. In the EYFS, the school should ensure that best practice in assessment and planning, and in supporting and extending children's learning, is consistently implemented across the whole of the setting.
  6. Extend the availability of outside resources in the EYFS to provide further opportunities for independent, purposeful play.



### **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 sound overall.
- 3.2 Pupils are adequately educated in accordance with the school's aim to develop the pupils' skills and attitudes in order for them to become effective learners. Pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding appropriately in subject areas and in their extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 Pupils are articulate and talk well on a variety of topics in which they are interested. They listen to their teachers and one another carefully, read well and are becoming more skilled in writing expressively. Their numeracy skills are good and, when given the opportunity, they are able to apply them to other curriculum areas, such as geography and science. Opportunities exist for them to express their creativity and these are evident in displays around the school and in subjects such as design and technology, music and art. ICT skills are sound, and are adequately used across the curriculum. Pupils' reasoning skills are good, particularly when discussing a particular topic or asking relevant questions of their teachers. The good level of participation in physical education, and games in particular, increases pupils' physical skills.
- 3.4 At the age of 11, pupils' achievement overall is sound so that the considerable majority transfer to their first choice of secondary school; this includes places gained through a number of scholarships or awards. Given the size of the school, pupils also achieve appropriately in individual and team games. In music, speech and drama, the school has a history of good standards being reached in various examinations. These successes make a significant contribution to pupils' good personal development, giving them a greater understanding of team work as well as developing a respect for pupils' differing abilities.

The following analysis uses the national data for 2008-2010, the three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in national tests at age 11 have been similar to the national average for maintained primary schools. Nevertheless, within this overall picture there are variations that are caused by the small size of pupil cohort in each year, so that in some years overall attainment is good. The pupils study a curriculum which is appropriately applied in order to enable them to achieve much of their potential. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make appropriate rates of progress in relation to pupils of similar abilities. Such rates of progress are directly related to the sound and, on occasions, good quality teaching they receive. Pupils with SEND and EAL also achieve at a level that is commensurate with their abilities, largely because their teachers ensure they are given tasks in their lessons that are appropriate to their level of ability.

- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They approach tasks with enthusiasm and concentrate well. They know how to apply themselves in lessons and persevere when the task is challenging. Pupils work well together and have the same level of interest and determination when working individually. The presentation of their work is of a good quality. Pupils' behaviour is also good and they clearly enjoy learning. The high quality of the relationships that they have with each other and with their teachers has a positive impact on their achievement.

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

- 3.6 The quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is sound overall.
- 3.7 As was found at the previous inspection, both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, make an appropriate contribution to pupils' achievements and fulfil the school aims. The curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and is generally broad and balanced. There are, however, some minor imbalances in the amount of time devoted to certain subjects, such as humanities. In addition to the national curriculum subjects, the curriculum includes French, dance, religious education, squash, ice skating and personal, social and health education. Curriculum planning is sound at an individual class level, but there are no overall schemes of work for each subject, upon which to base planning for continuity of pupils' learning and progression.
- 3.8 Whilst class teachers and learning assistants support such pupils' learning well in individual lessons there is a lack of overall coordination and monitoring of SEND provision so that the school support for such pupils is not sufficiently strong. For pupils who are gifted and talented, the lack of subject-based planning to cover Years 1 to 6, means that these pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not receive any additional help in the form of extra-curricular provision. The newly appointed coordinator for this area is well aware of the problems and has good strategies in hand to address them.
- 3.9 The extra-curricular provision is good, being broad and varied. The programme includes art, chess, choir, instrumental lessons, gardening, karate, sewing and book club. In the summer term, Years 5 and 6 spend three days at an outdoor pursuit centre. The curriculum is further enriched by visits that supplement the work undertaken in the classroom; recent visits include the local contemporary art gallery and Bio-City. A number of visitors to the school make presentations that supplement learning, for example, parents who originate from the Virgin Islands and Brazil spoke to the pupils about their countries and a parent dentist spoke about dental care.
- 3.10 The school has good links with the local community that are of benefit to the pupils. There are links with local charities and the pupils are involved in many activities of the local Catholic Church.

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

- 3.11 The quality of teaching that pupils receive is sound.
- 3.12 Pupils' sound levels of achievement are largely as a result of the appropriate and, on occasions, good teaching they receive in individual lessons. The teaching is generally effective in promoting pupils' steady progress. In addition, such teaching helps pupils to broadly achieve their academic potential, which is in line with the aims of the school.
- 3.13 Opportunities are offered to pupils to enable them to discuss their work in subjects such as art and English. This has a good impact on developing pupils' self-confidence and oral communication. Basic skills are emphasised in English and mathematics and enable pupils to attain the satisfactory standards they do in these subjects by the time they leave the school. Pupils' creative skills, which are good in subjects such as music, drama and art, are similarly well promoted by the sound and sometimes good teaching they receive.

- 3.14 Teachers' subject knowledge and lesson planning are good and, in the best practice, clearly planned lessons take into account an assessment and understanding of pupils' needs. The best lessons are also characterised by lively and enthusiastic teaching, appropriately set tasks and by the use of questioning techniques that challenge pupils' thinking. In such teaching, the tasks set are varied and well matched to pupils' abilities. Praise and encouragement are well used and this adds to pupils' learning and progress. On those occasions where teaching is less effective, the pace of the lesson is much slower and the work is not so closely matched to different pupils' abilities. Consequently, pupils have more limited opportunities to think for themselves or take some responsibility for their learning.
- 3.15 Work for pupils with SEND is adequately planned by individual teachers, in order to provide work appropriate to individual need and help during lessons. However the school's current planning for such pupils' individual needs provides limited information to enable teachers to adapt their teaching even more appropriately. Pupils with EAL are well catered for in individual lessons or, in some cases, through withdrawal support. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are adequately addressed in most lessons, although on occasions they are not given work that is suitably matched to their individual needs.
- 3.16 Classrooms contain resources of sound quality which teachers use appropriately to motivate their pupils. An interactive whiteboard is available in one room and this helps to produce stimulating lessons, thus enthusing pupils and maintaining their interest.
- 3.17 The marking of pupils' work is of good quality. In many instances it contains encouraging words, suggestions for improvement and appropriately set targets for pupils to achieve. Pupils also say that they are, on many occasions, given verbal feedback, so that they know what they have to do to continue to improve. Assessment data is compiled to check on pupils' progress in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Similar data is not as available in other subjects and so its use to plan future work for the pupils is limited.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The personal development of the pupils is good.
- 4.2 This most positive feature of the school helps it to successfully achieve its aim in this regard. The quality found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. It reflects the happy, caring, respectful, relationships and strong sense of community in the school. The development of pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence and personal belief is central to their experience. Pupils are mature, courteous and caring. They are considerate of one another and show respect for their teachers through good manners and behaviour. They have a genuine concern for the welfare of others.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school, based on a Catholic ethos, embraces all faiths in a positive manner. Pupils enjoy many spiritual experiences which include termly mass, 'stations of the cross' during Lent, assemblies based on Bible stories, hymn practices and visits to the places of worship of different religions. Pupils also show a strong appreciation of relationships and care for the wider world through discussions and reflections on issues such as differences between people and the uniqueness of the individual.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is good. Pupils demonstrate a strong moral awareness by means of their fund-raising. They are well aware of the needs of others. For example, harvest festival provides an occasion for the collection of food items which are then donated to a local charity. Similarly, on their own initiative, pupils organised a dance competition raising a considerable amount of money for charity and regularly the different school houses organise cake sales. Books are also collected and sent to various countries in Africa. Throughout there is an emphasis on good manners and respect for others. Pupils are well aware of the boundaries established by the school community and all well aware of right and wrong. Consequently, the disciplinary policy rarely needs to be implemented. Pupils also show a good understanding and concern for the environment.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is good and the school provides many opportunities to develop their self-confidence. Senior pupils take on responsibilities within the school with enthusiasm. Prefects are encouraged to perform their duties in a sensible manner. Pupils make presentations to the school on personal pieces of work and hobbies, through contributions to assemblies and performing in the annual school production. Lunch times are a good social occasion when pupils mix freely and have high standards of behaviour. Pupils have a sound knowledge of particular public institutions in the United Kingdom.
- 4.6 Cultural development is good. The school's multi-cultural community is well respected by all and plays a fundamental part in the promotion and appreciation of different faiths and cultures and beliefs. Pupils are respectful and most tolerant of others' cultures and beliefs. An awareness of the world outside school has been further developed most recently by inviting parents to talk about their countries of origin. Pupils develop a good awareness of their own culture when they visit museums and art galleries, such as the Nottingham Contemporary Art Gallery. Their understanding of the diversity of people living in the United Kingdom is also good.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for the pastoral care of pupils are good.
- 4.8 Such arrangements make a significant contribution to the pupils' good personal development. An emphasis is placed on developing confidence, making the most of pupils' abilities, developing a healthy lifestyle and respecting diversity. Throughout the school community, the staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils, in accordance with the school's aims of ensuring that pupils respect and understand themselves, others and the multi-faith world in which they live. This was a similar situation to the one found at the time of the previous inspection.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are good. Pupils are confident that they could turn to any member of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, if they had a problem. Whilst pupils do look after each other, limited opportunities are provided for senior pupils to support the welfare of junior ones or give older pupils more responsibility.
- 4.10 The school encourages a healthy lifestyle. Meals are appetising and well-balanced, with choices including a vegetarian option. Within the school day and in extra-curricular activities, pupils acquire the habit of taking regular exercise; the grounds and play areas offer many opportunities for fun.
- 4.11 Effective procedures promote pupils' good behaviour and guard against harassment and bullying; pupils report that there is no serious bullying and that staff deal rapidly and effectively with minor disagreements between pupils. Pupils are encouraged to manage their emotions so that they consider and respond to a situation, rather than react to it. Similarly, good communication systems are in place regarding pastoral issues; problems and the measures taken to deal with them are carefully recorded. The few incidents of unacceptable behaviour are handled constructively and due account is taken of any related difficulty or disability.
- 4.12 The school has an appropriate plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.
- 4.13 The recent demise of the school council means that pupils are not so effectively able to express their views on the running of the school, although the small pupil/teacher ratio does mean that staff have a good understanding of pupils' worries and concerns.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 The staff are dedicated, in line with the school aims, in ensuring each pupil is happy, feels safe and enjoys coming to school. The staff know the pupils extremely well. They monitor the pupils' welfare in a particularly caring manner. Welfare, health and safety issues are taken most seriously and staff are diligent in their observation and awareness of potential hazards.
- 4.16 Safe recruitment procedures are appropriately followed. The staff receive good quality child protection training which is updated in accordance with regulatory requirements. The safeguarding policy and procedures are well understood within the school and are reviewed and evaluated by senior managers. Risk assessments

are efficiently carried out both within the school and on external trips. They are thorough and all necessary aspects are covered.

- 4.17 A strong emphasis is placed on the physical safety of pupils. The premises are checked on a daily basis. A clear line of communication is in place from the staff to the caretaker to highlight any hazard.
- 4.18 Fire safety is taken seriously and is guided by the school's fire policy, with safe and efficient arrangements in place. Fire practices are regularly carried out and detailed records kept. Evacuation practices and precautions are regularly and suitably tested, as are alarms and extinguishers. The school has recently been visited by the fire brigade, who were satisfied with school's fire arrangements.
- 4.19 The full range of welfare and protection policies are known to the staff, for example, the procedure when a pupil is taken ill or where there are any safeguarding issues.
- 4.20 Pupils who are ill or require first aid receive immediate attention. A good number of staff have appropriate first aid qualifications, although more need to be trained at the higher level. A sufficient number are trained in paediatric first aid. At present the school does not have an adequate medical facility and this is unsatisfactory.
- 4.21 The school's attendance registers are suitably maintained although the storage of the admission register does not meet regulatory requirements.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of the governance of the school is unsatisfactory overall.
- 5.2 Since the previous inspection the number of trustees has been reduced. In part trustees are successful in their administration of the school and in helping the school to achieve some of its aims, particularly those relating to helping pupils to love, respect and understand themselves, others and the multi-faith world. In other areas, however, they are less successful, notably in the need to have a sufficiently effective oversight of all sections of the school and in their monitoring of the work of the school. This problem is exacerbated by the decision to use a significant number of part-time teachers, which hampers to an extent the oversight and monitoring of pupils' performance. Furthermore, individual trustees do not have a sufficiently wide variety of backgrounds to be able to give strong and effective support to the educational direction of the school. The acting chair of trustees is in regular contact with the very recently appointed head teacher and is supportive in that role. In addition a recently appointed trustee is in regular contact with the school and is beginning to support the school's management team. Trustees are generally well informed about aspects of the work of the school through reports that have traditionally been prepared for the board, although they rightly recognise that their knowledge of curriculum developments is more limited.
- 5.3 Trustees attend the school for special events such as concerts and performances but with such a small group of trustees, it is difficult, in spite of their best efforts, for them to get into the school during the working day to effectively oversee its work. Strategic and financial planning is sound and trustees make adequate provision of human and material resources, although some resources are rather worn and need to be replaced, and certain aspects of the ICT provision are barely adequate. Detailed school improvement planning has recently been put in place for the present academic year. Consequently, the trustees give sound support to the school but at present do not provide sufficient challenge for the school's future development. Trustees fulfil their responsibilities for welfare, health and safety, as well as safeguarding, adequately, with one recently appointed trustee taking the lead in these respects. An annual review of safeguarding policies and practices is carried out, although the efficiency with which this is done is not thorough. Although one trustee has recently participated in safeguarding training, the trustees generally have not participated in appropriate training to cover the wide range of pertinent topics related to school governance. They monitor regulatory compliance effectively although little monitoring of their own effectiveness is carried out.

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

- 5.4 The quality of the leadership and management of the school is unsatisfactory overall.
- 5.5 Since the previous inspection the quality of leadership and management had deteriorated but following the appointment of a new head in 2012, significant strides have been made to improve its quality. A new management structure has been put into place, many school policies have been updated and roles and responsibilities

have been allocated to individual members of staff. However, insufficient time has elapsed for the impact of these strategies to have had an effect. Those now in senior positions are efficient and approachable and are determined to put into place strategies to further the school's aim of offering pupils a range of educational opportunities to fulfil their aspirations and potential. Whilst the quality of pupil's education is sound overall, the lack of effective management and oversight of pupils' performance limits what is achieved.

- 5.6 As yet little progress has been made in devolving responsibilities to staff for subject coordination, in implementing a system of performance management and in introducing a system for monitoring teaching and learning. The current leadership of the school has not yet had sufficient opportunity to make an impact on raising pupils' achievement levels and their rate of progress. However, this has been recognised and appropriate strategies are being put into place. Good quality school improvement and strategic planning has been very recently introduced with an appropriate number of objectives clearly identified. This planning is based in the short term of approximately one year and the school rightly recognises that it needs to be extended to provide a two or three year detailed overview. The school takes appropriate care to select good quality staff and adequate strategies for the induction of new staff are in place. Professional development, until recently, has been limited, although staff are effectively trained in their roles in relation to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Policies and procedures for aspects of school life have been recently updated and these are of good quality, although an appropriate system to oversee their effective implementation is not in place. Teachers, classroom support assistants and non-teaching staff are deployed effectively and make a significant contribution to pupils' welfare and learning. Staffing levels are adequate and good support is given to pupils.
- 5.7 Senior managers are diligent in ensuring that those working with pupils are suitably checked through appropriate recruitment procedures. The central register of appointments is completed accurately and fully and all staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- 5.8 Good links with parents are a characteristic of the whole school and relationships are maintained by open, easy communication and personal interaction on a daily basis. Staff are readily available to speak to parents and aim to deal with any concerns as soon as they arise.
- 5.9 In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents indicated that they are happy with the education and support their children receive, the progress they make and the quality of communication between home and school. They are also very content with the range of extra-curricular activities available. A significant minority expressed concern over the quality of leadership and management. Inspectors support these concerns but noted considerable recent improvement.
- 5.10 Many opportunities are in place for parents to be involved in the life of the school. They are welcomed at sporting, music and drama events. Volunteers often accompany pupils on outings, help in the school library or come in to school to tell pupils about their jobs and to share their experiences and talents. A small, but well supported Friends' association runs a variety of social events for parents and families in order to raise funds for additional resources that benefit all children.
- 5.11 Information is readily available to prospective parents through the prospectus, website and well-organised notice boards. New families and children are welcomed



in to the school at any age. Current parents are kept up to date about key events through letters sent home via the pupils.

5.12 Reporting to parents is good. Well-produced, detailed reports on academic achievement and progress are provided at the end of each term. Parents are encouraged to respond to each report, and invited to discuss them at regular parents' evenings. Parents indicate that they are very happy with these arrangements.

5.13 Since the previous inspection, the school's complaints policy has been updated to include the timescale within which complaints will be handled.

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

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

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 The effectiveness of the setting is good. Children are valued as individuals, safeguarded effectively and cared for very well. Staff are supportive of each other and communicate closely with parents to meet children's learning and development needs. Children under the age of three are provided with a good start in the nursery. Effective teaching for older children encourages confidence and a positive attitude to learning, with children becoming increasingly independent, creative, critical thinkers. Staff constantly strive to develop provision, and as a result the potential for continuous improvement is good.

### **6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.2 Leadership and management are good. Trustees recognise the importance of the EYFS but their involvement is limited. Required policies, including those for equal opportunities, are in place, ensuring the safe and efficient management of the setting and the elimination of discrimination. Risk assessments are comprehensive. The suitability of staff has been rigorously checked.

6.3 Opportunities for continued professional development are satisfactory. Senior managers have been pro-active in securing funding for development, resulting in significant improvements to the quality of resources, although outdoor spaces are currently under-used. Excellent links with the local authority impact positively on the quality of provision. Partnership with parents is strong, with an overwhelming majority stating that their child is happy at school and makes good progress. Effective self-evaluation identifies specific targets for improvement which are included in the whole school development plan.

### **6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.4 The quality of provision is good overall. Indoor environments provide a rich array of accessible, stimulating resources. A good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, particularly for younger children, encourages independent, active learning. Older children engage in a higher proportion of adult-led activities, but opportunities are available to develop ideas independently. Adults are sensitive to children's needs and, in most successful interactions, extend children's learning. Outdoor areas are less well resourced, providing fewer opportunities for self-initiated, purposeful play. A systematic approach to observation provides a detailed insight into children's achievements and needs. The quality of assessment recorded in development portfolios, is good overall and occasionally is outstanding. Progress is tracked accurately and meaningful experiences are planned for the next steps in children's learning. At present, the best practice in the assessment and monitoring of pupils' learning is not in place right across the setting. Parents are kept very well-informed about children's progress. Relationships between adults and children are excellent. Daily checks of potential hazards create a safe, secure environment. Well-managed care routines for the youngest children ensure their welfare needs are met.

### **6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.5 Outcomes for all children are good. In the nursery, children settle quickly, making rapid progress due to the sensitivity of key adults. Older children make steady progress reaching, or working securely towards, the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Children become skilful communicators by the age of three. In Reception they begin to write familiar words and simple sentences. Children count confidently up to 10 objects in the Nursery, and older children describe the properties of 3D shapes. Access to computers in all rooms helps children to become confident in the use of ICT. In child-initiated activities, children play purposefully with friends and alone. They converse confidently with adults, showing consideration for each other. Children develop good hygiene habits, and older ones understand the importance of physical activity, healthy eating and staying safe. All children appear happy, and approach their learning enthusiastically.

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

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

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**