



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

TOWER COLLEGE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Tower College

Full Name of School	Tower College
DfE Number	342/6001
Registered Charity Number	526611
Address	Tower College Mill Lane Rainhill Prescot Merseyside L35 6NE
Telephone Number	01514 264333
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Email Address	missoxley@towercollege.com
Principal	Miss Rachel Oxley
Chair of Governors	Mr David Williams
Proprietor	Christian Schools Ltd
Age Range	3 to 16
Total Number of Pupils	429
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (218 boys; 211 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 56 5-11: 194 11-16: 179
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Andrea O'Grady
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	20th to 23rd November 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 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 on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Mrs Jean Marsland

Mr Huw Daniel

Mr Chris Emmott

Miss Valerie Craven

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Tower College is a co-educational day school for pupils aged three to sixteen. The school aims to provide an education of high academic standards, where pupils learn the benefits of adherence to excellent behaviour in a caring, Christian environment. Special emphasis is laid on the spiritual aspect of the education provided. Pupils of all faiths or none are accepted. They are expected to show tolerance and respect for each other's faiths, and kindness and courtesy in all aspects of school life.
- 1.2 Situated in Rainhill, Merseyside, the school was founded in 1948 by the parents of the current principal. The school is based around The Tower, a nineteenth century house, with a range of additional purpose-built accommodation and sports fields. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is housed in two classroom blocks, purpose built in 2007. In April 2012 the school opened Tower Tots, a nursery for children aged three months to three years. Tower Tots was inspected by Ofsted in October 2012 as a new EYFS setting and is not subject to this report. The school is a registered charity and operates as a limited company. A board of governors oversees the work of the school.
- 1.3 The pupils come from a wide catchment area covering Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside. The majority come from Warrington, Widnes and Liverpool. Around 70 per cent of the pupils come from families that are white British; the remaining thirty per cent are ethnically diverse. The majority of parents are young professionals, many being doctors in the large teaching hospitals nearby.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, 429 pupils were on roll, of whom fourteen boys and eleven girls were in the EYFS, ten of those attended part-time. There were 65 pupils in the pre-preparatory department in Reception and Year 1, 40 boys and 25 girls, and in the preparatory department for Years 2 to 6, 84 boys and 76 girls. The senior school for Years 7 to 11 had 179 pupils.
- 1.5 The overall ability profile of the pupils in Years 1 to 6 is above the national average, with a fairly wide range of abilities, with most having an ability that is above average. In the senior school the ability range is above the national average. Twenty-five pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 21 receive specialist learning support. For seven pupils, English is an additional language (EAL); all receive support for their English. No pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school from Reception to Year 11. The year group nomenclature used by the school for its EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Bluebirds	Nursery
Peter Pan	Nursery

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school successfully meets its aims. Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, the pupils' achievement is good, both in their academic work and in their activities. All pupils, including those with SEND, with EAL and those who are gifted and talented, make good progress in relation to their abilities as a result of the good teaching they receive. In the EYFS, progress is good in relation to the children's starting points. The pupils' achievements are well supported by the good curricular provision. Following the recommendation of the previous inspection, the provision for creative subjects has been extended. The range of technological subjects remains limited to ICT. In the EYFS, few opportunities are offered for children to develop their ICT skills. Following the recommendations of the previous inspection, extra-curricular provision has been extended although it remains limited. In the EYFS, as at the previous inspection, the outdoor learning environment is not used effectively to extend the children's learning. In the EYFS, support for children with EAL is largely confined to an extra-curricular activity rather than within the curriculum, which limits progress. The pupils' achievements in all parts of the school are supported by their good attitudes to their work, the good skills they develop and their excellent behaviour.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school. The pupils' spiritual development is very strong. Their social development is excellent and they have a keen awareness of cultural issues. They have a very strong sense of right and wrong, including the youngest children in the EYFS. Pupils demonstrate a high level of mutual respect and support for each other and for all members of the school community. Pupils of all ages willingly take on responsibility and make a valuable contribution to the school and the wider community. Excellent arrangements are in place for pastoral care. Pupils are encouraged to have healthy lifestyles; however, the variety of food offered at lunchtimes is limited. Arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. All required policies are now in place.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. Governors are fully committed to supporting the ethos of the school. They give attention to their role of overseeing the work of the school. However, until recently they have not been fully aware of their responsibility to check that the school meets all statutory requirements. The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents and carers, is good. The senior management team, including the EYFS, are committed to supporting the pupils in their work and in their personal development. However, the appraisal system for staff is not sufficiently thorough to fully support staff development. The school has made progress in working towards meeting most of the recommendations of the previous inspection.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop systems to ensure that the governors monitor regulatory compliance consistently.
2. Establish, including in the EYFS, a more thorough appraisal system which effectively supports staff in the continuing development of their roles.
3. Extend the curricular provision so that pupils have the opportunity to study a broader range of technological subjects, and increase the number of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils.
4. Increase the variety of food provided at lunchtimes so that there is a greater choice available each day, and week by week.
5. In the EYFS, ensure that the outdoor learning environment is used more effectively, and develop the provision for children with EAL through more effective planning within the curriculum and in adult-led activities.
6. In the EYFS, enhance the staff's knowledge and understanding of the use of ICT to support the children's learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils of all ages demonstrate good levels of understanding, knowledge and skill in a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, in line with the school's aims. All pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and those who are more able, achieve well across all areas of learning. The pupils are confident and articulate. They listen well and express themselves in a mature manner relative to their ages. They have well-developed skills in numeracy and literacy, which they apply well across the curriculum. In the EYFS, children develop appropriate speaking and listening skills, learn about letter sounds during reading and writing activities, and are able to write and understand simple numbers. Children in EYFS are learning to use ICT; older pupils use ICT effectively. The pupils develop increasingly good skills in thinking independently and critically. In the EYFS, the children enthusiastically explore their surroundings and investigate with confidence. At all stages, the pupils have good creative and physical skills. They achieve well in a range of activities including debating, art, music and sport. Individual pupils achieve at a high level in sport; for example, nationally in tennis and swimming. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 11, all go on to further education and/or training.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. For pupils up to Year 5 attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Performance in national tests at age eleven in 2009 to 2010 were above the national average for maintained primary schools. The performance in English in 2009 was well above the national average for maintained primary schools. Over the same three-year period, GCSE performance was above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools, and showed further improvement in 2012. IGCSE results in ICT are above the average for schools worldwide. The evidence available in school indicates that pupils up to Year 5 make good progress in relation to their abilities. The level of attainment in national tests at age eleven and the results at GCSE indicate that pupils from Years 6 to 11 make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Throughout the school, pupils with SEND and EAL make good progress from their starting points. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a large majority of both pupils and parents said that they were pleased with the amount of progress made. This good progress was confirmed by the inspection in lesson observations, in the scrutiny of the pupils' work and in discussions with pupils about their work.
- 3.4 All pupils show an excellent attitude to their work in lessons and activities. They are enthusiastic, well-motivated learners. They are focused on their learning and they speak about it with genuine enthusiasm. The pupils' behaviour is excellent. They organise their work well and settle to work quickly both independently and when working in groups. They co-operate well with each other and with the staff and successfully create an atmosphere that is highly conducive to their learning and progress.

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

- 3.5 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.6 The curriculum throughout the school is appropriate in its balance and breadth, covering all the requisite areas of learning and supporting the school's aims. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. In the EYFS, the curriculum provided is wide ranging and incorporates some changes in line with the new EYFS framework. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, limited use is made of the outdoor learning environment in the EYFS which impacts on the children's physical development. Provision for SEND pupils across the school is good and identifies strategies to enable teaching staff to effectively support pupils within lessons. Pupils with EAL receive extra tuition in English. In the EYFS, support for children with EAL is largely provided through an extra-curricular activity rather than within the curriculum, thus limiting progress. Following the recommendation of the previous inspection, provision for more able pupils is now good across a range of activities in all parts of the school; flexible timetable arrangements allow talented musicians to study music as an additional GCSE subject.
- 3.7 Pupils in the preparatory department benefit from specialist teaching in art, ICT, music and PE. Spanish is taken from Year 5, with the addition of French in the senior school. At GCSE, in addition to the compulsory core subjects, three separate sciences are available, alongside a range of optional subjects. The pupils' individual option choices are met through flexible timetabling arrangements. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, some progress has been made towards providing more creative subjects. For example, dance is now included as part of the physical education (PE) curriculum and a wider range of work covered in art. However, across the school, the provision for technological subjects is still limited to ICT. In the EYFS, children are offered few opportunities to use ICT which limits the development of their future skills. Strong provision for person, social and health education (PSHE) is made across the curriculum and throughout the school, and fully supports the school's aims. Pupils in the senior school receive helpful advice and information in preparation for GCSE choices and for choices at 16+. Following the recommendation of the previous inspection, Year 11 pupils have the opportunity to do work experience, working with younger children within the school.
- 3.8 The curriculum for all ages is greatly enhanced by many worthwhile trips and visits. EYFS children explore their local community; Year 6 visit a local museum for their history studies and Years 10 and 11 visit the Ypres World War 1 battlefields. The pupils also benefit from carefully-planned and imaginative cross-curricular projects and trips. In response to the previous inspection, the range of extra-curricular activities has been increased. A minority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire still felt that the school does not provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection found that although a good range of activities is offered, the number of activities remains small so that opportunities for the pupils to benefit from extra-curricular activities are limited. Pupils benefit from the school's good links with the local and international community. Many of the school's charitable ventures benefit the local community and bring in visitors to the school, and strong links exist with the local Anglican church. Pupils perform in local music festivals and learn about education in other countries through the school's supportive links schools in Malawi and Uganda.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.10 Teaching at all stages is effective in promoting the pupils' learning and progress and supports the school's aims well. It is almost always carefully planned and takes account of the pupils' prior needs and interests. In the EYFS, teaching makes learning stimulating and enjoyable with many opportunities provided for exploration, investigation and creative work. The needs of pupils with SEND, those with EAL and the more able are well known to staff. In the majority of lessons, good provision is made to support those pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are almost always successful in capturing the interest and enjoyment of pupils. In the best lessons, the teaching was excellent. It was well planned to meet the needs of individual pupils, made full use of the good range of resources, provided high levels of challenge and showed a good balance between directed teaching and pupils working independently. For example, in the EYFS where the children were exploring the properties of foam. In less successful lessons, the teaching was less well planned, made less provision to meet individual pupils' needs, and was characterised by a slower pace and a less imaginative approach, which restricted pupils' progress.
- 3.11 In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, considerable progress has been made in developing pupils' independent and critical thinking skills throughout the school so that, in the best lessons, pupils are challenged to review their ideas and to justify their opinions. At all stages, including the EYFS, the relationships between pupils and teachers are highly positive and conducive to learning. Pupils interviewed expressed appreciation of the support they receive for their learning in and out lessons. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a large majority of pupils said that their teachers helped them to learn and encouraged them to work independently, both of which were confirmed by the inspection. Homework is set regularly and is effective in reinforcing learning and in preparing for the next lesson.
- 3.12 Effective use is made of assessment to plan for the next stages of pupils' learning and progress. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, much improvement has been made in the quality of marking, which is now consistently good. Work is marked regularly, and helpful comments are given so that the pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve still further. Pupils interviewed were very appreciative of the marking, saying that it is effective in helping them to improve. In the EYFS, clear links between planning, observation and assessment ensure the children's next steps are easily identified. Since the previous inspection, the use of ICT in teaching has increased; more effective use is made of ICT to provide information and to stimulate the pupils' thinking and writing. In the EYFS, the teachers' use of ICT to support the children's learning remains limited, hindering the children's learning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school fully meets its aim to provide an education where special emphasis is laid on the spiritual. The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. At all stages, they are self-confident and emotionally mature for their age. They have high levels of self-esteem, recognising their own worth whilst being highly aware of the equal worth of others. They are thoughtful of others and live respectfully alongside fellow members of their community, including those who have beliefs different from their own. They take full advantage of opportunities provided through the curriculum, through their activities, and through assemblies and circle time to reflect on the non-materialistic aspects of life and to enhance their strong spiritual development. The pupils' spiritual awareness is deepened by their thoughtful response to annual events such as the Peace Day service, Remembrance service and harvest festival.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils from the youngest to the oldest display a highly-developed sense of right and wrong. Their behaviour is excellent. They clearly understand and subscribe fully to the school's code of conduct. They understand the part that each individual's actions play within the school community as a whole. The pupils successfully develop a personal moral code, and keenly debate topical ethical issues. Children in the EYFS learn about the difference between right and wrong in assemblies and in the Good News club. Older pupils' interest in debating ethical matters is seen in the senior school in the popularity of the extra-curricular activity 'The Only Way is Ethics' where pupils explore ethical matters important to them.
- 4.4 Across the school, the pupils' social development is excellent. They are at ease talking to adults and with each other. They are unfailingly polite, articulate, helpful and show care and support to other members of the community. Musicians in the senior school band, for example, assist younger or less experienced members who have recently joined the ensemble. Pupils readily take on roles of responsibility: prefect, house captain or student council representative. In the EYFS, the children take delight when it is their turn to be "our leader today". The pupils show concern for those less fortunate than themselves, and support a wide range of charities both local and further afield, including two African orphanages. The pupils show an excellent awareness and understanding of social, political and economic matters, as for example in the senior school where they participate in mock elections. The pupils also show a strong sense of responsibility towards the environment, such as expressing their concern for endangered species in art work.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. They enjoy learning about their own and other cultures. In the preparatory department, they learn about weddings from different cultural traditions. Year 2 pupils answer the register in a different language each day. During Diversity Week, the pupils in the pre-preparatory department wear the national costume of their family's ethnic origin. In the senior school, pupils take part in a debating competition in which they gain an insight into countries whose views they are representing. Children in the EYFS celebrate a range of cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year.

- 4.6 In all sections of the school, the pupils' personal development is excellent in relation to their age so that by the time they leave the school they are extremely well prepared to make a positive contribution to the wider society.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Pastoral care is a strength in all sections of the school. In the EYFS, the key person ensures each child feels safe and secure and that their needs are identified and met. Staff provide highly effective support and guidance for pupils in accordance with the school's aims. Excellent communication ensures that concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively. A small minority of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire said they did not feel they had someone in school they can turn to should they have a concern. However, pupils interviewed were confident that they do have people from whom they can seek help. Relationships across the school between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are extremely positive.
- 4.9 Since the previous inspection, the school has achieved the award of Healthy Schools Status, which, with the PSHE programme, educates pupils about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. In the EYFS, children successfully learn about staying safe, about the importance of good hygiene and about healthy eating. All pupils have opportunities to take regular exercise through PE and outdoor play. Lunches provided are sufficient in quantity and quality. However, the range of food offered each day, and week-by-week, is very limited, thus making it difficult for pupils to make healthy choices.
- 4.10 The school has highly-effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and dealing constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the school achieves high standards of behaviour, a judgement supported by the inspection. A few pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said the system of sanctions and rewards was not fair. Pupils interviewed were more positive, with which the inspection agrees. Measures to guard against harassment and bullying are highly effective. The pupils reported that incidents of bullying are rare but, should they occur, are confident they would be dealt with satisfactorily.
- 4.11 A majority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the school does not ask for or respond to their opinions. The inspection found that the school regularly seeks pupils' views in senior school through the school council and suggestion boxes. Younger pupils have fewer formal opportunities to put forward their ideas, although in the final term of each year they are asked for their suggestions. The school has a suitable three-year plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.13 Across the school, including the EYFS, the pupils' welfare is promoted effectively and the safeguarding of children is ensured. Of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all said that their child feels safe at school. This was confirmed by pupils interviewed during the inspection. A suitable safeguarding policy is now in place and all staff receive appropriate training in child protection at the required intervals. Following the recommendation of the previous inspection, all required pre-appointment checks on staff are now carried out and recorded appropriately.
- 4.14 The school has effective arrangements to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are held and any concerns arising responded to. All members of staff receive fire awareness training, with designated fire officers receiving appropriate training. An annual audit of health and safety arrangements is carried out and items noted for attention are addressed. Following the recommendations of the previous inspection, chemicals are now stored safely and gas cut-off taps in the laboratories are readily available for use in an emergency.
- 4.15 Good provision is made for pupils who are ill, injured or have SEND. The needs of pupils with medical or other needs are made known to staff as appropriate. Medical records are sufficiently detailed and appropriately stored. First aid boxes located around the site are very well maintained. The first aid policy is now clear and comprehensive, and a suitable number of staff are trained in first aid, including at the appropriate level for those staff who work in the EYFS. The induction programme for new staff includes helpful training on safeguarding and health and safety arrangements.
- 4.16 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored for the required period of time.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governors, many of whom have a long association with the school, are fully committed to the ethos of the school and to supporting it in achieving its aims. Throughout the school, including the EYFS, the governors effectively discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The governors know the school well and are kept informed by the school's leadership through the provision of formal reports for their termly meetings. Between meetings, governors and leadership are in touch frequently to discuss more day-to-day matters.
- 5.3 The governors have a good understanding of the workings of all sections of the school. They are involved with the senior management team (SMT) in drawing up the school development plan, and in providing support, challenge and stimulus to aid the school's continuing development. Progress has been made towards meeting most of the recommendations of the previous inspection. The governors have met the statutory requirement to carry out an annual audit of the arrangements for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school. However, until recently, they have not been fully aware of their wider responsibility for ensuring that the school meets all statutory requirements.
- 5.4 The governors bring to their role a good range of experience and expertise and, from time-to-time, they undertake training in support of particular aspects of their roles. They are well known in the school. They attend events and spend time in school in order to familiarise themselves with the day-to-day life of the school.

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 Throughout the school, at all levels of responsibility, the quality of leadership and management is good, and good links have been established with parents, carers and guardians, effectively supporting the aims of the school. The school has made progress in meeting almost all of the recommendations of the previous inspection.
- 5.7 The leadership and the SMT continue to enhance the caring and inclusive ethos of the school as a whole, including the EYFS where staff ensure that the children are provided with a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. The leadership is well supported by the SMT; their strong commitment to the school is evident. Together, they give clear educational direction and set high standards for themselves and for the school community which ensures a good level of pupils' achievement and their excellent standard of personal development. All members of the team have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas that require further development. Lead EYFS staff regularly monitor and evaluate the provision, particularly in preparation for the introduction of the new EYFS framework. They have ensured that the EYFS has made progress since the previous inspection. All members of the SMT are effective in setting priorities and ensuring that they are

achieved. The recent innovation of 'Fresh Eyes', an arrangement which enables staff to meet together in groups to put forward ideas and discuss new initiatives, has been successful in increasing the wider staff's involvement in school development.

- 5.8 All sections of the school are well managed, and curriculum and pastoral leaders are keen to develop the areas for which they have responsibility. They work effectively with colleagues to develop links between the different sections of the school. The leadership and SMT are largely effective in the discharge of their delegated responsibilities, although in the past, not all policies have been sufficiently detailed or sufficiently carefully monitored. The arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are effective in all parts of the school. Following the recommendation of the previous inspection, all required pre-appointment checks on staff and governors are now carried out correctly and recorded accurately.
- 5.9 Management at all levels is successful in ensuring that sufficient high quality staff are appointed, and that they are well supported on an informal level. They are appropriately trained for their roles in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety and meeting the needs of all children. They are encouraged to take up opportunities for other training to support their wider roles. Appropriate induction arrangements ensure new staff receive the information and training they need to begin their work at the school. Teachers in all parts of the school, including in the EYFS, are regularly observed teaching. These observations provide a useful focus for discussion. However, there is no systematic formal system of appraisal in any section of the school to allow staff to reflect more fully on their work, or to identify areas for development or further training.
- 5.10 The school maintains constructive relationships with parents in all sections of the school in accordance with its aims. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and parents of children in the EYFS who were spoken with during the inspection, expressed themselves satisfied with most aspects of the education and support provided for their children. A small minority of parents responding to the questionnaire said they did not have sufficient opportunities to be involved in events and other aspects of the school's work. In response to the recommendation of the last inspection, the school has taken steps to extend the ways in which parents can be involved. The inspection found that parents do now have a greater number of opportunities to be involved, including attending events such as musical and dance evenings, and special services such as the harvest festival and Christmas services. In addition, parents have the opportunity to be involved in focus groups where they meet with the school's leadership and governors, and can put forward ideas or raise concerns.
- 5.11 Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school. This is now available via the school's recently updated website. In all sections of the school, each term parents receive appropriate reports about their children's work and progress. These are supplemented each half term by progress cards in both the preparatory and senior departments. Reports are personal to the pupil and give an indication of progress in each curriculum area. Parents have good opportunities to discuss their children's work and progress at two parents' evenings each year, and informally at other times. In the EYFS, effective partnerships with parents ensure appropriate interventions for those children who need them and successfully engage parents in their children's learning and progress. Parents of children with SEND are invited to an additional parents' evening each year where they have the opportunity to discuss at greater length their child's needs.

- 5.12 The school has in place an appropriate complaints procedure. Any concerns are handled in accordance with that procedure. A small minority of parents who completed the questionnaire said they were not satisfied with the way the school had handled their concerns. However, the inspection findings indicate that the school takes due care in the way it handles concerns.

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