



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ARNOLD HOUSE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Arnold House School

Full Name of School	<b>Arnold House School</b>	
DfE Number	<b>213/6034</b>	
Registered Charity Number	<b>312725</b>	
Address	<b>Arnold House School 1-3 Loudoun Road St John's Wood London NW8 0LH</b>	
Telephone Number	<b>020 72664840</b>	
Fax Number	<b>0207 2666994</b>	
Email Address	<b>headmaster@arnoldhouse.co.uk</b>	
Headmaster	<b>Mr Vivian Thomas</b>	
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Barry O'Brien</b>	
Age Range	<b>5 to 13</b>	
Total Number of Pupils	<b>272</b>	
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>	
Numbers by Age	<b>5 -13</b>	<b>272</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total:</b>	<b>272</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>03 Mar 2015 to 06 Mar 2015</b>	

## 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 February 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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

Mrs Amanda Childs

Mr Peter Cook

Mr Richard Merriman

Mr John Preston

Reporting Inspector

Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Senior Master, IAPS school)

# 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) Recommendation 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	6
<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

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

- 1.1 Arnold House aims to provide an education of breadth and excellence and to serve the pupils' best interests across the ability range. It aims to do so in a supportive, purposeful and stimulating environment, to provide a foundation for the pupils' development within a Christian ethos, to help them mature in a well-rounded way by developing their enjoyment of music, the arts and sport, and to promote good citizenship through the virtues of courtesy and industry. The school is an educational charitable trust and a limited company, and is administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1905 as a boys' preparatory school, situated in St John's Wood, in the north west of London. It owns a seven-acre sports ground and activity centre at Canons Park in Edgware. Pupils live within a five mile radius of the school.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there were 272 pupils on roll aged between 5 and 13 years. In Years 1 to 4, known as the junior school, there were 144 pupils. In Years 5 to 8, known as the senior school, there were 128 pupils.
- 1.4 Entry to the school at age five is not on a competitive basis. Additionally, the school offers places for entry into Years 5 to 7 through its bursary scheme. As indicated by standardised tests, the overall ability of pupils is above the national average with almost one-fifth of the pupils being of well above average ability. The school has identified 45 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who require varying degrees of additional educational support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. No pupils are identified as requiring support for English as an additional language, although 27 pupils are identified as being bilingual.
- 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 quality of the pupils' academic achievement is excellent. This fulfils the school's ambitious aims for each pupil to develop his talents and succeed in securing a place at his chosen senior independent school. By Year 8, attainment for all pupils, including the most able and those with SEND is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils are confident in their abilities and show themselves to be very capable of working co-operatively and independently when given the opportunity. Pupils are highly articulate, read confidently for both pleasure and information, and are able to reason logically. Pupils are attentive and listen carefully enabling pace and progress to be sustained. On occasion, focus and pace are diminished when pupils do not apply their listening skills to full effect. The broad and balanced curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and is highly effective at meeting the needs of the pupils. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has increased since the previous inspection. Pupils take part in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which successfully meet the school's aim to develop their understanding, enjoyment and experience of music, the arts and sporting achievement.
- 2.2 The school is highly successful in its promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within a generous Christian ethos. Pupils are given extensive opportunities to grow as confident and harmonious citizens with a strong sense of self, and tolerance of each other. Their moral and social awareness is excellent. The school's excellent pastoral system ensures that all pupils are particularly well cared for as individuals. This is supported by excellent welfare, health and safety procedures that uphold the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. Governors have a secure understanding of the education the school provides. The governors are particular in the carrying out of their legal duties, including the safeguarding of pupils. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Senior leaders provide a clear educational direction for the school. The recently revised management structure creates an effective collegiate ethos that makes good use of the leadership skills within the school. Following recommendations of the previous inspection, the school has a clear strategy and identified budget for the professional development of staff. The school has introduced monitoring systems to give a more comprehensive oversight of all aspects of teaching including marking but these are not yet fully developed. Links with parents are excellent. Parents expressed their overwhelming satisfaction with the education and support provided by the school.

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

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

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that monitoring identifies and consolidates the best practice in teaching across all year groups, in particular, the use of worksheets, marking strategies and deployment of in-class support staff.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 This quality of excellence represents successful fulfilment of the school's ambitious aims. All pupils receive excellent preparation for the next stage of their education. Pupils are confident in their abilities and are not afraid to put forward their ideas. They show themselves to be very capable of working co-operatively and of working independently when given the opportunity.
- 3.3 Pupils have an extremely high level of knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of curriculum subjects and extra-curricular activities, particularly in music. They have well-developed physical abilities as a result of the many opportunities provided for external sport and indoor activities. Pupils are highly articulate, read confidently for both pleasure and information and are able to reason logically and with a balance of views. Younger pupils achieve excellent standards of literacy and older pupils write well and speak with confidence. For example, Year 4 pupils were able to write confidently, independently and with great imagination describing different views surrounding an Anglo-Saxon raid on Britain. Year 6 pupils were able to talk with excellent maturity regarding hyperinflation and its impact upon Hitler's Germany.
- 3.4 The pupils' mathematical skills are well developed. The extensive use of ICT in history and music is illustrative of excellent, confident use and application. The school has recently become British and European champions in a history competition. Examples of excellent art and design work are on display around the school. Posters supporting 'Thinking' and 'Anti-bullying' convey their message most effectively. Clay work is also of an excellent standard. A very large majority of pupils contribute to the high standard and broad spectrum of music in the school. Many achieve excellent grades in external examinations.
- 3.5 Sports teams achieve high levels of success locally, winning several north London tournaments in football and rugby. The Under-11 gymnastics team won gold at the London championships, and finished fourth nationally.
- 3.6 Each year a significant number of pupils are awarded academic, musical or sporting scholarships by their prospective senior schools. Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests. On the evidence available, by Year 8, attainment for all pupils, including the most able and those with SEND is judged to be well above national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, demonstrates that the pupils' progress is excellent, relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. This is confirmed by their performance in lesson observations, their work, and pupil interviews.
- 3.7 The pupils' academic development is excellent. They have a most positive attitude and approach to learning which strongly supports their overall achievement. In almost all lessons they show excellent concentration and the ability to work independently and co-operatively. Occasionally, pupils are prone to talk over each other, leading to a loss in pace, concentration and focus on learning.

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

- 3.8 The provision of curricular and extra-curricular activities is excellent.
- 3.9 The broad and balanced curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and is highly effective at meeting the needs of its pupils. Teaching by specialists provides pupils with an excellent range of learning experiences, which contribute very effectively towards the development of knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils receive learning support from a highly effective department and all staff are very aware of the needs of these pupils. Pupils are provided with numerous opportunities in lessons and in clubs and activities to develop communication and literacy skills. In addition to the National Curriculum subjects, French is taught from Year 1, Latin from Year 5 and Greek for invited pupils in Years 7 and 8. There are discrete library periods for all pupils in Years 2 to 6 which encourages a love of reading. There are regular visits from authors and other speakers to talk to the pupils.
- 3.10 There are no timetabled personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lessons. There are plentiful opportunities for the pupils to develop their understanding in this area, through assemblies, visiting speakers, trips, visits and a post-examination programme in Year 8. The school is systematically reviewing coverage of PSHEE to ensure that it exploits all available options to the full benefit of pupils' awareness, knowledge and understanding.
- 3.11 Curricular documentation is thorough and the recently introduced system for the wider monitoring of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is identifying further opportunities and areas for development.
- 3.12 The use of ICT by pupils has increased since the previous inspection with the introduction of commercially produced electronic internet browser books and net-books. This promotes cross-curricular work, such as in a book including work completed by Year 6 pupils on tectonics in art and geography teaching. Since the previous inspection the *Compass Course* for pupils in Years 5 and 6 has been enhanced. It provides opportunities for developing independent learning, research, ICT skills and teamwork. The process concludes with all pupils choosing a charity to support.
- 3.13 A wide and diverse range of extra-curricular activities enriches the pupils' educational experience. This successfully meets the school's aim of developing pupils' enjoyment of music, the arts and sport. All staff take part in the provision of these activities. In addition, pupils may create and run their own club or activity. The school has a wide range of links with the local community including local schools, the church and the local hospice, which pupils visit regularly and support with their charity work.
- 3.14 From Year 1 there is an extensive range of residential and day visits which broaden the pupils' perceptions and knowledge of the world around them. These include field trips, sports tours, residential visits and trips overseas. There are many opportunities for the pupils to take part in a wide range of musical activities. Most sports are played at the extensive facilities at Canons Park. Pupils play in a wide range of teams in all the major sports.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Teaching is consistent with the school's aim to serve the best interests of the pupils throughout the ability range. Almost all teaching is effectively planned with clear objectives, which are shared with the pupils. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and include a variety of tasks that hold the pupils' interest and challenge their thinking. In a very small amount of teaching, the pace is slower and the range of challenges is insufficient to fully stretch pupils at all ability levels. This results in the pupils' loss of focus, progression in their learning and diminished standards of behaviour.
- 3.17 Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and offer frequent praise and encouragement to good effect, which stimulates the pupils' enjoyment of their work. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of teaching that almost always shows full awareness of their learning needs.
- 3.18 Most teaching uses skilful questioning to tease out the pupils' knowledge, and encourages them to make links to previous learning and other subjects. This enables pupils, especially the most able, to achieve very high standards. A good example of this was seen in a lesson for older pupils on hyper-inflation. Using their newly acquired and previous knowledge, pupils articulated their arguments most persuasively.
- 3.19 Since the previous inspection smaller groups have been introduced for mathematics and English from Years 4 to 8. This provides greater opportunity to focus teaching more effectively on the individual learning needs of the pupils, creating greater challenges for the more able whilst focusing targeted support for those requiring it. This worked highly effectively in a small mathematics group in which the pupils identified, understood, and corrected their own errors made in an assessment test.
- 3.20 Throughout the school the excellent teaching is enhanced by high quality, varied and plentiful resources, which are almost all used to good effect. Interactive whiteboards are installed in all teaching rooms and, when used effectively these enhance the quality of pupils learning. Almost all worksheets are used constructively to promote the pupils' learning. On occasion their purpose is less clear and they support limited learning. In the most successful teaching, support staff are deployed most effectively to benefit the pupils' learning. On occasion, in the lower years, they are not always deployed in a manner which fully exploits opportunities to assist with the pupils' learning.
- 3.21 Planning of teaching shows a clear awareness of those pupils requiring additional support. In the most successful teaching, the information disseminated by the learning support department is used most effectively to promote the pupils' learning.
- 3.22 The school has taken action successfully to meet the recommendation in the previous inspection to improve the consistency of marking through the introduction of systems to review consistency in marking. This is part of a wider system of reviews of assessment, recording, teaching and learning that is overseen by the management team. Marking of the pupils' work is up to date and in almost all cases provides praise and rewards for good work and targets for improvement. Managers continue to explore and trial a variety of marking strategies across and within departments which all involve feedback and target setting for pupils. Management reviews these on a termly basis and is building a reference bank of samples that match the school's agreed standards and expectations.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils are confident and self-aware. They have a strong awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses. In lessons and clubs they are highly articulate and present their opinions with great enthusiasm, although occasionally at the expense of listening carefully to the arguments of others. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem, reinforced by the school's regular and visible assessment and the rewarding of effort. The pupils' spiritual awareness and sense of self is excellent. The pupils care for each other and have a strong sense of pride in their school. This is evident in the great pleasure they demonstrate in seeing their fellow pupils rewarded for effort, achievement and good citizenship during assemblies. Through assemblies and religious studies (RS), music and art pupils have time to reflect and are able to develop an excellent understanding of various religious beliefs. Grace is said at all meals and pupils show their appreciation of the food provided.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. This is reflected in their well-developed understanding of the difference between right and wrong and in their behaviour. This is strongly helped by the positive guidance they receive from staff. The pupils clearly recognise a moral responsibility to help those in need. They raise substantial funds for a variety of local, national and international charities. In addition to these, a specific charity is proposed and democratically chosen for support by the pupils.
- 4.4 The social awareness of pupils is excellent. Pupils are extremely keen to accept roles of responsibility, such as form captains, house captains, sports captains and monitors. They take their roles seriously and have a keen understanding of the need to lead by example as seen demonstrated in and around the school and in pupil interviews. Pupils have a secure level of understanding of the community in which they live and show awareness of fundamental British values. They develop an appreciation of social, political and economic matters.
- 4.5 The cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils are given extensive opportunities to grow as confident and harmonious citizens, with a strong sense of self and tolerance of each other. Visiting speakers, parents and workshops help to deepen the pupils' understanding and knowledge of all faiths and cultures. The school's *Compass Course* further enhances their understanding in this area. Pupils enjoy the musical, artistic and cultural life of the school with a high level of accomplishment.
- 4.6 By the time they are in Year 8, pupils have extremely well developed personalities, exhibiting independence and maturity. They are very courteous and attentive. They speak confidently and are aware of how to interact successfully with each other and with adults.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 Staff provide excellent support and guidance for pupils in line with the school's aims. The school's systems to monitor and record pastoral care ensure that staff are aware of the needs of each pupil. Regular meetings are held at which staff discuss or highlight individual or general matters relating to the pupils' pastoral care. Relationships between staff and pupils and those between the pupils themselves are excellent. Behavioural problems rarely occur but are dealt with successfully. Pupils know to whom they can turn in the case of a concern. Positive relationships are evident in all aspects of school life.
- 4.9 Pupils are enabled to be aware of the importance of healthy eating and of the benefits of regular exercise. Lunches are nutritious and offer a good choice and a healthy option plus clear labelling to enable those with dietary needs to make the right choices. Regular opportunities for exercise support the pupils' awareness of healthy living.
- 4.10 The school has effective measures to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying. There is a strong culture of promoting praise and rewarding good effort and behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are operated fairly. In response to the pre-inspection pupil questionnaires, a very small minority of pupils and parents commented that the school does not deal well with bullying. The inspection evidence does not support this view. The school has a robust anti-bullying policy and holds an annual anti-bullying week. Posters designed by pupils strongly reinforce the messages about bullying.
- 4.11 In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, a very small minority of pupils felt that the school does not ask for their opinions and respond to them. The inspection evidence does not support this view. The school runs an effective school council, and in interviews pupils expressed satisfaction that this is effective in giving voice to their opinions.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 The well-being of all pupils is promoted highly effectively and staff deployment ensures that children are appropriately supervised at all times. Child protection and staff recruitment arrangements have very close regard to official guidance and the safeguarding of pupils is taken most seriously. All staff, including non-teaching staff, undergo the correct level of training and this is regularly updated. Inter-agency training to a higher level is undertaken for those staff with a designated safeguarding role. The school has strong relationships with the local agencies. The checks required to ensure the suitability of staff are carried out thoroughly and the school's central register of appointments is properly maintained.
- 4.15 A comprehensive health and safety policy is in place, which is monitored effectively. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Fire exits are kept free of obstruction and their signage is clear throughout the school. Fire safety procedures are thorough and regular fire drills are held. Risk assessments are comprehensive and frequent checks ensure that any hazards or

faulty equipment are removed or repaired without delay. Potential risks on visits out of school and on the school's sites are carefully assessed.

- 4.16 Procedures in case of accidents and for the administration of first aid are efficient, timely and competent. A good number of staff are trained in first aid and some have a higher-level qualification. The school makes suitable arrangements for pupils who are unwell during the day and minor injuries are treated quickly and safely. The school's arrangements take account of pupils with SEND.
- 4.17 Admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and stored correctly.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent.
- 5.2 The board of governors successfully administers and oversees the work of the school, helping to secure the school's aims and rigorously sustain its direction and purpose. The governing body has an extensive range of expertise and experience, and includes past and current parents. Since the previous inspection, governors have been allocated specific roles. Through full board meetings each term and an efficient committee structure, the governors supervise the financial planning of the school and its educational provision. They ensure that the school has adequate staffing, accommodation, resources and regard to pastoral matters.
- 5.3 The governors are a strong source of advice and support for the head. Presentations at governors' meetings from members of staff and reports from the head and members of the management team provide the governors with detailed information about the school's successes. They also provide the opportunity for governors to ask challenging questions. Special school events are well supported by governors. Governors visit the school to observe it in action and meet staff and pupils.
- 5.4 The governing body discharges its statutory duties most carefully ensuring that staff suitability is properly checked and that the single central register of appointments is rigorously maintained. Those governors with specific responsibility for safeguarding receive appropriate training. Governors discharge their responsibilities for the oversight of regulatory compliance, including safeguarding, welfare, health and safety conscientiously, and carry out the annual review of safeguarding. Governors have comprehensive procedures for evaluating the work of senior leaders.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management at all levels are highly successful in achieving and promoting the aims of the school. The leadership works with dedication and a unified sense of purpose to give strong educational direction that focuses on the needs of the pupils. Since the previous inspection, a new management structure has been introduced, including new posts at deputy head level in academic and pastoral areas. This has effectively broadened the overall monitoring of the work of the school and staff and enables strengths and areas for further improvement to be identified.
- 5.7 Highly effective procedures, and all requisite policies, are maintained and implemented, including those that ensure the welfare, health and safeguarding of pupils. There is a clear strategy in place for professional development along with appropriate budgeting measures. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Clear and detailed staff and parent handbooks provide information on the school's aims, procedures and expectations.

- 5.8 There is an effective induction process for new staff. The school appoints, and checks suitably, good quality staff. They receive appropriate training in the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils. Senior leaders conduct detailed staff appraisals and department leaders carry out annual reviews of their subjects. These are supported by training for staff to ensure curricular coverage and promote consistency across the school in academic and pastoral matters.
- 5.9 School action plans clearly outline priorities for improvement and development. They assign responsibility and indicate timescales and evaluation. Regular meetings between staff, and between senior leaders and managers enable excellent communication. Since the previous inspection, more emphasis has been placed on appraisal, monitoring and tracking systems in teaching. While still in its early stages, this is already having a positive impact on the consistency of aspects of teaching and learning and is used to inform planning.
- 5.10 The school has excellent relationships with parents. In response to questionnaires and in interviews, parents expressed their overwhelming appreciation of the open and welcoming atmosphere in the school. This is evident from the contact parents have with staff. They appreciate the accessibility of staff through email, telephone or in person to discuss any matters concerning pupils. Parents express very high levels of satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children. They feel that any concerns are handled quickly and well. An overwhelming majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the education their children receive and all would recommend the school to another parent. Detailed procedures for formal complaints are available to parents on the school's website. These outline the handling of concerns in a timely and appropriate manner and are implemented effectively.
- 5.11 Throughout the school, parents have opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. Parents are invited to be involved in school life through participation as class representatives, helping on trips, visits and at events. The school's parents' association is very active and highly supportive of the school. It contributes significant levels of funds for the benefit of the school and its other charitable causes.
- 5.12 Communication with parents is excellent. In pre-inspection questionnaires all parents expressed satisfaction with the information they receive about the school and its policies. In the lower years there are opportunities for parents to have informal conversations with all staff at the start and end of the day, higher up the school parents are readily able to contact staff and the headmaster. Parents speak very highly of the manner in which guidance is offered on the choice of a senior school for their son. A weekly newsletter is much appreciated by parents. The website provides a wealth of useful information for parents, including that required for parents of current and prospective pupils. There is also an *Annual Review* and annual school magazine which provide information on the school and its successes. In interviews parents reported that they feel very well informed about their children's progress through termly reports, parents' evenings and the head's forums. Parents praise highly the way in which the older children are prepared for the transition to secondary school.

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