



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
WINDRUSH VALLEY SCHOOL**

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Windrush Valley School

Full Name of School	Windrush Valley School
DfE Number	931/6105
Address	Windrush Valley School 2 London Lane Ascott-under-Wychwood Oxfordshire OX7 6AN
Telephone Number	01993 831793
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Email Address	info@windrushvalleyschool.co.uk
Head	Mr G A Wood
Proprietor	Windrush Valley School Limited
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	111
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (63 boys; 48 girls;)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 8 5-11: 89 3-5 (EYFS): 14
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 111
EYFS Gender	(Mixed)
Inspection Dates	10 Feb 2015 to 13 Feb 2015

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 2010.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for 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 staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions. 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 Adrian Palmer

Mr Alexander McCullough

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmaster ISA School)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Windrush Valley School is a co-educational day school for boys and girls aged from three to eleven, situated in the heart of the North Cotswolds countryside in the village of Ascott-under-Wychwood in Oxfordshire. The school was established in Burford in 1951 and moved to the current site in the mid-1980. It is owned by Windrush Valley School Limited and was purchased in 1999 by the two directors, who are also the head and deputy head of the school.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 111 pupils on the roll, of whom 63 were boys and 48 girls. There were eight pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all above the age of three. Forty-four pupils were in Reception plus Years 1 and 2, and 59 were in Years 3 to 6. Eight pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom has a statement of special educational needs. No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The school has a wide catchment area, drawing children from towns, hamlets and villages within a twenty-mile radius of Ascott-under-Wychwood. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with around three-quarters of pupils in the cohort having ability that is at least above average.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a positive, caring environment in which happy and self-confident children can grow and where academic excellence can thrive. The school serves to encourage and challenge pupils to achieve and sustain high standards of individual academic success and personal behaviour. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing the pupils as individuals, and encouraging their independence of thought and spirit within a climate of personal responsibility and regard for others. Central to this philosophy is the concept that all children must experience every aspect of the school's activities and provision. In effect there is no automatic opt-out clause for parents or pupils.
- 1.4 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 Windrush Valley School is successful in meeting its stated aims. Pupils' achievements, including those in EYFS and those who have SEND, are good. The school prepares the pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education. The EYFS makes an excellent contribution to the strong development of the children they look after in all aspects of their education. All pupils are courteous, eloquent and tolerant of each other and they develop their understanding and skills well across a range of subjects and make good progress. Such progress is largely the result of the generally good quality of teaching that the pupils experience. In a small number of lessons, where the pace is laboured and the work set and style of teaching does not take account of the range of abilities in the classroom, progress is more limited. The one-to-one provision for those pupils with SEND is excellent, although this support is not consistently applied in the classroom teaching. The excellent behaviour of the children and strong relationships they have with each other and with their teachers make a positive contribution to the progress made. The broad and balanced curriculum, alongside an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits, supports pupils' learning well.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent and this is well supported by the excellent arrangements for pastoral care. Children in EYFS develop strong and positive relationships with each other and their staff. They work and play very well together being mindful and tolerant of each other. Pupils across the school are respectful of each other and work well together. They have a highly developed social and cultural awareness. They appreciate the importance of rules and why it is important to follow them. The quality of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound. All the necessary arrangements are in place to minimise risk to the pupils whilst in school, although concerns were noted about certain aspects of staff recruitment, which have now been resolved.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are sound. The proprietors have a very high profile around the school and are well known by all members of the school community. They have a clear vision for the school and have overseen a number of significant developments in both the fabric of the school and the resourcing in many subjects, especially information, communication and technology (ICT), since the previous inspection. However, they have not been sufficiently rigorous in the monitoring of regulatory compliance, especially in relation to carrying out the necessary checks prior to the appointment of staff and the manner in which the safeguarding policy is subject to annual review. Neither have they fully addressed the recommendations of the previous report. The informal systems of monitoring the standards achieved in teaching and learning, and the development of the curriculum, have led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Links with parents and carers are excellent and in the pre-inspection questionnaire no significant concerns were raised. This was confirmed in the discussions inspectors had with parents during the inspection.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that recruitment checks, concerning the barred list check, medical fitness and references, are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school [Part 4, paragraph 18.(2)(a)(c)(d) and 18.(3), and paragraph 21(3)(a)(ii)(v)(vi) and (b) under Suitability of staff and proprietors: and, for the reason, Part 3, paragraph 7, under Welfare, health and safety].
 - ensure the proprietors of the school exercise their responsibilities as outlined in Paragraph 34.(1)(a)(b)(c).

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvement(s).
1. Introduce a rigorous system for the annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures by the proprietors.
 2. Develop a formal system for the monitoring of teaching and learning.
 3. Add success criteria to the school development plan, which are linked to the impact on the achievement of the pupils.
 4. Improve the quality of marking and reports with a more consistent approach to target setting.
 5. Introduce a formal system of professional development for the staff which is linked to the development plan and training.

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, including those in the EYFS, are well educated in accordance with the school's aims of providing a positive, caring environment in which happy and self-confident children can grow and where academic excellence can thrive.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, the moderated profile scores at the end of Reception show that almost all will have reached the expectations of the Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding these. Careful planning, tailored to the needs of each child, enables children in the EYFS to have well-developed imaginative and creative skills, as was seen in a free-play session where two co-operated to drive a fire engine whilst another built an accurate model of a combine harvester using wooden blocks. Children in the EYFS become more articulate as they converse with each other and develop the ability to listen and respond to instructions. They develop fine motor skills as they learn to hold pencils and cutlery correctly. Children in the Nursery learn to enjoy new experiences as they solve ever more complex problems using the wide range of materials available to them. As a result, they develop their imagination, communication and teamwork skills, as was seen whilst they used connecting blocks to measure and compare different lengths of string.
- 3.4 Across the rest of the school, pupils, show imagination and originality in their creative writing and develop well-refined comprehension skills. The presentation of written work is usually good. The pupils' numeracy skills are good and they are able to apply them well in lessons across the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate well-developed reasoning skills in mathematics. Pupils enjoy their experience at school and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding well in many subject areas. They are articulate and talk enthusiastically about work that they have done and topics they are studying, such as pupils in Year 6 researching information on their country of choice in South America. Since the previous inspection pupils have made good progress in developing their ICT skills, including those in the EYFS, who show that they are learning ICT skills as they use the digital camera and programme a toy to move in a specified way. The many skills the pupils have developed as a result of excellent planning and teaching prepares them well for the transition to the next stage of their education. On leaving the school, all pupils transfer to their first choice senior schools, some of which have rigorous academic entry criteria. Most years, a number of pupils are offered scholarships to these schools.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been good in relation to the national average for pupils in maintained primary schools. There is no discernible difference between the results in English and mathematics or between those of girls and boys. These results show that pupils, including the highly able, make good progress in comparison to pupils of similar ability nationally. Evidence gathered in the scrutiny of work, lesson observations and curriculum interviews during the inspection support this view. Pupils with SEND make at least good progress, largely as a result of the excellent support they receive in their individual lessons with specialist staff. There are currently no pupils in the school for whom English is a second language.

- 3.6 Outside the classroom, pupils perform well in sport and music. As well as participating in inter school matches a number represent the school at regional and national level in swimming, athletics and cross-country, often with considerable success. Many pupils are successful in individual music examinations on a wide range of instruments and music ensembles have met with success in a local music festival.
- 3.7 The pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary and positive relationships with each other and their teachers enable good learning to take place. They concentrate well and persevere at a given task. They are given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and they do so with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

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

- 3.8 The quality of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The school provides a broad curriculum offering progression and a good range of opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities in accordance with the school aims. In the EYFS, a balance exists between indoor and outdoor activities and children show they are developing their independence through child-initiated activities such as choosing which materials to use when making their polar bears or macaws, or what game to play when outside. The staff know the children thoroughly and assessments made on entry to the setting, together with recording of observations and a new electronic tracking system, enables the staff to tailor plans to take account of the individual needs of each child. This enables for early interventions to be arranged using outside agencies for those children with SEND or EAL, together with those more able who will need more challenge.
- 3.10 The curriculum in the main school is enhanced with French and Latin. Physical education (PE) has a prominent place in the curriculum and is a strength of the school. The curriculum is monitored informally through group discussions in staff meetings and individually with teachers, and through regular scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' displays.
- 3.11 Curriculum enrichment weeks are planned each year in order for the whole school to focus on a relevant topic for a week, for example World War 1. This approach enables the pupils to direct their own learning and express themselves in a more creative way. A range of personal, social and health education (PSHE) topics is taught as opportunities arise. This means that the citizenship scheme of work is not yet formally integrated into the curriculum. The curriculum supports the achievement of success in the National Curriculum tests and the examinations for transfer to independent schools at the end of Year 6.
- 3.12 The school is appropriately resourced to deliver the stated curriculum. The school has responded satisfactorily to the recommendation to promote independent learning by the greater use of ICT, although not all classrooms are equipped to make full use of technology. Interactive whiteboards in some classrooms and a new set of 20 laptops are having a positive effect on integrating ICT into the curriculum, enabling a broader range of activities to be offered including personal research. The effective use of ICT-based learning has had a positive impact on the teaching and learning leading to faster rates of progress and better attainment. The children have regular access to books in the classrooms and around the school. Younger children make good use of the mobile library service.

- 3.13 A good range of visitors to the school and visits outside is carefully planned to enhance the curriculum. Visitors to the school have led talks about endangered species and World War 1. Recently there have been various day visits, for example, trips to Blenheim Palace, a Space Centre and the Imperial War Museum, which have developed the pupils' understanding and empathy for topics studied. Residential trips include overnight camps in pods at a local campsite, an adventurous activity week for Year 6 and European trips to France and Holland. Where the curriculum covers matters of politics, it does so in an even-handed manner.
- 3.14 The school has strong links with the local community. The weekly Monday assemblies and the annual harvest festival take place in the parish church; many children participate in a local music festival, achieving a great deal of success. The school also makes good use of the local playing fields for teaching games and village halls for PE and events such as the school disco. These activities are well integrated into the curriculum and this aspect is a strong feature of the school's provision.
- 3.15 The range of extra-curricular activities available is excellent for the size of the school and plays a significant part in the pupils' personal and social development. The pupils particularly benefit from the wide variety of sporting options and they have many opportunities to take part in activities of various kinds, for example, computer club, construction, theatre and choir. All of the children from Year 2 to Year 6 take part in poetry performance and are entered for speaking examinations; a large proportion of children in Years 3 to 6 enjoy individual peripatetic wind and percussion lessons.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 Throughout the school, teaching is effective in providing a secure foundation for pupils to consolidate their learning, acquire new knowledge and understanding and develop their skills. Generally, teachers have high expectations of their pupils.
- 3.18 The high expectations of the enthusiastic and caring staff in the EYFS are responded to eagerly by the children, who demonstrate they are happy at school and enjoy their learning. Varied and well-planned activities including regular PE sessions, together with consistently excellent teaching that is well matched to children's needs, enable all children to increase their learning and physical development with their individual personalities emerging as they become more independent.
- 3.19 Elsewhere in the school, the teaching is effective in capturing the pupils' interest in their work and most of it secures good progress. The teachers' good subject knowledge is an important factor in setting work of a suitable challenge, characterised by detailed planning, excellent time management and thoughtfully devised learning tasks, which build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. In particularly successful lessons, the pace of learning was brisk, the teacher's enthusiasm was infectious and the pupils' engagement and enjoyment were clear. In most cases, the teachers' open-ended questioning challenges all pupils to aspire to the highest standards and work is matched to their needs appropriately, allowing children with SEND to access the lesson at their level, or to stretch the more able. In the small minority of lessons where teaching is less

successful, questioning is not used well to move learning forward, the pace of learning is sometimes ponderous, tasks lack imagination and variety in teaching style, and as a result, the pace of learning slows. Weaker lessons are also less likely to match work sufficiently well to the range of pupils' needs, whether for the most able or those with SEND. In contrast, the specialist learning support for pupils with SEND is carefully tailored to meet the pupils' individual needs and is extremely effective in allowing them to progress well; individual educational plans are provided for these pupils.

- 3.20 Teachers make good use of the educational resources available to support the pupils' learning. In the best examples, the use of ICT entuses and challenges pupils of all abilities, but in the classrooms without interactive whiteboards it is more difficult for teachers to integrate technology into learning. Staff in EYFS use their excellent resources particularly well so the children develop their individual skills.
- 3.21 Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely positive; they are founded on mutual respect. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that teachers did not always give help. During the inspection, inspectors found that pupils are confident to ask for help, safe in the knowledge that they will receive it. In many of the lessons observed, the contribution of all pupils was valued and encouraged by the teacher.
- 3.22 The quality of assessment is sound. The school has begun to use an electronic tracking system in the EYFS to augment successfully its understanding of the pupils' ability, achievements and therefore progress. The use made of such data to inform planning and accelerate pupil progress, although in its infancy, is having a positive impact but it is not yet fully implemented across the whole of the school. The school's marking and reporting policies are designed to provide useful feedback to pupils and parents to help them understand next steps more clearly, but they are not yet being followed consistently in all areas of the school. Therefore, the recommendation of the previous inspection to apply the marking policy consistently and provide targets on reports has not yet been appropriately implemented.
- 3.23 Procedures for monitoring the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school are informal, for example through work scrutiny and learning walks, and have had some success in improving teaching quality. However, the lack of any formal monitoring of teaching, such as lesson observations, has allowed inconsistencies in the quality of teaching to go unchallenged.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in achieving its aim of allowing happy and self-confident children to grow and thrive. It actively promotes the personal development of the pupils, for example through the PSHE programme or work in religious education (RE). Pupils are courteous, welcoming and very sociable. They show a high level of respect for each other and towards adults. Pupils at every stage in the school are well prepared for the next phase of their education. In the EYFS, a weekly visit and session to the Year 1 classroom together with interchange of staff enables the transition from Nursery through Reception to Year 1 to be smooth.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils are self-confident and self-aware, showing emotional maturity for their age. Pupils show an ability to appreciate the non-material aspects in life, benefiting spiritually from the school's link with a local church, where they hold weekly assemblies, or attend celebrations such as the annual Harvest Festival at this venue. Pupils also understand how expression of personal feelings may be through drama, music or other creative arts.
- 4.4 The pupils demonstrate strong moral development. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, and their behaviour is consistently excellent. Pupils have a solid understanding of the principles that underpin the school's expectations. They were able to explain why the school has rules and understood that they are largely responsible for their own safety and well-being. They also have a clear understanding of and respect for the fact that the civil and criminal law of England takes precedence. Pupils show respect for one another and are courteous and considerate in their dealings with other pupils and with adults. They co-operate and collaborate well in lessons, whether working individually, in pairs or groups and exhibit good manners. The school's house system provides an excellent framework to encourage pupils to support one another.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils readily accept responsibility from a young age, in many forms, for example as heads of houses and monitors who have a variety of responsibilities ranging from collecting in books to organising the recycling bins. The enthusiastic way that children in the EYFS are keen to take part in all activities, behave well, talk freely to each other and adults, including visitors, respect each other learning to share and take turns, shows that they are very happy in the setting where they feel safe and well looked after. Pupils also contribute willingly to charitable causes, locally, nationally and globally. The whole school recently enjoyed a fun run, involving all participants dressing up as a 'hero' for a national children's charity. The pupils work well together in lessons and the well-established lunch time routine allows the pupils to extend their social skills. Pupils learn to develop a respect for the differences between people, and understand the importance of combating discrimination.
- 4.6 The cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils learn to value the achievements of those from cultures different from their own, In part, this comes from their work in areas such as RE, where they have many opportunities to study other religions and cultures, for example work on China being done by pupils in Year 2. The pupils have a clear understanding about Western culture and in particular, the essential features of British society. For example, they learn about the

importance of democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law, although there is a lack of a formal channel for seeking the pupils' opinions. Pupils have visited a castle, a museum and a Tudor house to enhance their understanding of life in Britain. The annual curriculum enrichment week has also enhanced understanding and tolerance, for example through pupils studying the culture of North American Indians and life in Africa. Pupils in Year 5 have been communicating with children in a school in Zimbabwe and after school club in France.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 The school achieves its aim of providing the highest quality pastoral care which is central to its philosophy of enabling pupils to feel secure in a caring environment. Well-established pastoral care systems are supported by clear policies which are implemented successfully. In the EYFS, provision for the children's well-being is excellent and in both Nursery and Reception, a key worker is attached to every child, enabling strong bonds to be formed. Children in Nursery and Reception work play happily together and individually. They listen carefully and respond to instructions. In the EYFS, providers fulfil their responsibilities in overseeing the educational programmes by discussions of each child's achievement at the regular meetings to plan the next learning steps to enhance the children's development.
- 4.9 Every pupil from Year 1 onwards also has a key person, their tutor, who successfully ensures that their tutees are happy, confident and developing strong social awareness. Pupils understand the procedures and in conversations with inspectors stated that they know who to turn to if they have a problem; they feel confident they can talk to an adult for help or advice and they feel safe and secure in all sections of school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed their concern that they did not feel the school listen to their views. Inspectors found that there is no formal process at the school for this, but while some pupils say they would like a forum in which to make comments, others said they did not need this as they had sufficient opportunity to express their ideas to their form tutors. The high quality support provided by the staff ensures that a caring family atmosphere permeates the whole school. Form tutors are, in the first instance, responsible for the overall well-being of each pupil. The small size of the school means that every individual, member of staff or pupil, is known to everyone else and results in excellent relationships. The high level of care for the pupils is highlighted by the many opportunities during the week at which staff discuss pupils and their concerns both formally at the weekly staff meeting and informally amongst themselves.
- 4.10 The school's procedures for promoting good discipline and behaviour are effective. Pupils fully understand the system of rewards and sanctions that encourage positive behaviour. A small minority of responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teachers were inconsistent with their use of rewards and sanctions. Inspectors scrutinised records and found that these are awarded fairly and consistently by the teachers. The pupils enjoy the opportunities given to them by daily responsibilities and the house points system. They understand the procedures to guard against bullying and are confident that if it occurred, it would be dealt with quickly and constructively.
- 4.11 Pupils across the school have a strong sense of what a healthy lifestyle is like, both in terms of diet and exercise. Mealtimes continue the family feel: the food, which is prepared on site and is of a high standard, is nutritious and plentiful and good table

manners are insisted upon. Children in the EYFS eat well and they converse happily with each other at table. They are attended to by the staff, who encourage good table manners, correct use of cutlery and make this an important part in each child's personal and social development. Children also learn the benefits of exercise and of keeping themselves safe as they develop physical skills whilst using the outdoor areas, including a low obstacle course with a safe landing surface, to their fullest extent where they also learn to take risks 'safely'. Older pupils take advantage of the many opportunities for exercise, including the wide range of sport and recreational activities on offer.

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 This supports the school's aim to ensure the pupils are safe and well cared for and now have regard to official guidance. Whilst the safeguarding of the pupils on a day-to-day basis is effective, staff recruitment procedures have not always been carried out with the necessary rigour. Once at the school, all members of staff take part in a comprehensive programme of appropriate and regular training on the safeguarding of children. New staff are trained appropriately in child protection as part of their induction process. In the EYFS, safeguarding arrangements are appropriate with all staff receiving the necessary training in child protection procedures.
- 4.14 The school takes the necessary measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards by carrying out thorough risk assessments covering all areas of school life, including outings. Detailed records show that fire practices happen regularly. The rolling programme of health and safety procedures together with electrical testing is very thorough.
- 4.15 The arrangements for the administering of medicines with all details being recorded, together with the comprehensive first aid training programme with many staff having paediatric first aid certificates, ensures that the pupils' medical needs are met fully. A comfortable and suitable room is set aside for those pupils who may fall ill during the school day. The admission and attendance records are completed and stored appropriately.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The proprietors are committed to maintaining the ethos of the school, which is to provide a positive and caring environment in which happy and confident children can grow and where academic excellence can thrive. They are fully aware of their responsibilities in ensuring the school is compliant and they are very visible on a daily basis in the school. The financial planning and provision for resources and accommodation is good and meets the needs of the children. For example, the proprietors have recently financed the installation of new ICT infrastructure for the school. The excellent resources in the EYFS, which enable the children to develop according to their individual needs and be well-cared for, is evidence of their involvement in the work of the EYFS setting.
- 5.3 The high profile of the proprietors in the daily work of the school ensures that they are well known by staff parents and pupils; it allows them to have a clear insight into the daily workings of the school. The proprietors use the well-established parent consultative group as a sounding board for future developments in the school and, although there is a nominal committee, any parent is free to attend the termly meetings of this group. The current informal system of monitoring of standards across the school continues to lead to inconsistencies in the provision that the pupils receive.
- 5.4 While the proprietors carry out monitoring intended to ensure that policies and procedures meet requirements and work as intended, this has not always been successful. For example, in the past, timely checks on prospective employees have not always been carried out or recorded as required. Once this was pointed out, the proprietors made improvements, so that procedures now meet requirements. By the end of the inspection, all of required checks had been carried out and recorded correctly.
- 5.5 The response to the recommendations of the 2010 inspection report has been of limited quality. The monitoring of teaching and learning is informal, and there is still inconsistency in the quality of teaching, including marking. Reports still do not always contain sufficient information on targets and, while there has been some improvement in the use of ICT in learning, provision is still inconsistent although there have been improvements in its use in EYFS since the previous report.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, guardians and carers is sound.
- 5.7 The recent development plan for the school is limited in scope at present. It does not currently have any success criteria or analysis of the effect it will have on the future development of the school, making it difficult to judge whether, in fact, the plan has been implemented effectively.

- 5.8 The current informal management processes used to inform the drafting of the development plan or to support pupils' learning are not fully effective. The need to improve the consistency of teaching and learning was a recommendation of the 2010 inspection. The limited monitoring of the standards of teaching and learning and lack of any formal lesson observations hamper the school's ability to make improvements. The lack of a formal appraisal system for the teaching staff further weakens the evidence base for self-evaluation and planning, as well as for the professional development of teachers. In contrast, the well-embedded supervision system in the EYFS is appreciated by the staff. Staff across the school are suitably qualified and are subject to a rigorous induction programme, which includes all relevant training required for the welfare and safeguarding of the pupils.
- 5.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. The strong links have been strengthened even further by the active parent consultative group which acts as a parental sounding board when new initiatives are made. The very strong links existing in the EYFS enable stable relationships to develop between parents that are maintained as the child progresses through the school. The parents' questionnaire showed that parents are highly supportive and particularly happy with the caring atmosphere that is a feature of the school and that their children are particularly well looked after and there is a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activities offered to pupils.
- 5.10 Communication with parents is very strong and they are welcomed to a wide variety of school events. From the EYFS upwards, they have daily contact with the staff at drop-off and collection times and there is the opportunity of two-way written communication through the home/school reading book. Parents commented during the inspection that there was an open door policy at the school and the proprietor and all members of staff may be contacted at any time. Parents are encouraged to take a full part in the development of their child and contribute to their child's developing profile. They also enjoy receiving the weekly and termly newsletters describing the many activities which take place and details of the weekly menus that ensures that meals cooked at school are not repeated in the evening at home. The instant electronic contact that advises parents of immediate situations together with the website is valued by parents. Parents are always welcome at the school to attend a variety of functions. The very active and successful PTA organises a variety of social events which mainly are for the pupils accompanied by their parents, including discos, as well as helping out with refreshments at major school events.
- 5.11 An appropriate complaints policy is available. Concerns of parents are handled carefully and sensitively in line with stated procedures and the close links with parents ensures that nearly all difficulties are resolved informally and quickly.
- 5.12 A detailed website and school prospectus provide the parents of all current and prospective pupils with the required detailed information about the school.
- 5.13 Parents appreciate the full written reports that inform them regularly of their child's progress. These provide detailed records of work covered and progress made, but not all reports include targets or helpful suggestions about 'next steps'. This was a recommendation from the inspection in 2010

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