



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **INTEGRATED INSPECTION ST JOHN'S SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St John's School

Full Name of School	<b>St John's School</b>
DfE Number	<b>312/6059</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1063738</b>
Address	<b>St John's School Potter Street Hill Northwood Middlesex HA6 3QY</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 8866 0067</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 8868 8770</b>
Email Address	<b>office@st-johns.org.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Sean Robinson</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Johnny Armstrong</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>347</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): <b>57</b> 5-11: <b>231</b> 11-18: <b>59</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Katy Morgan</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>15 Mar 2016 to 18 Mar 2016</b>

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI standard Inspection was in February 2010.

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

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

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

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for children aged under two), 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 governors, 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 Geoffrey Marston	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Loraine Guest	Team Inspector (Principal, IAPS school)
Mrs Elizabeth King	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mr Peter Nicholson	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Oliver	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

# 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(s) 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	7
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	10
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	11
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13

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

- 1.1 St John's School is a selective independent day school for boys, aged three to thirteen years, founded in 1920. Since 1970, it has been located on its present site in Northwood and was acquired by the Merchant Taylors' Livery Company in 1984. It has operated since then under the auspices of the Merchant Taylors' Educational Trust. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee and welcomes boys of all faiths. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headmaster and developed a new senior leadership structure.
- 1.2 The school's motto is "be true to yourself" and it aims to enable each boy to extend and develop his talents and interests so that he can grow in confidence and fulfil his potential. The school seeks to create a safe, happy and stimulating environment, enabling excellent standards of behaviour, with parents having high aspirations for their sons. The school sets out to provide a moral and spiritual framework, enabling pupils to respect, value and appreciate the feelings and beliefs of others.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 347 pupils in the school. Of the 57 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 20 were in the Nursery and 37 in Reception. In total, 72 pupils were in Years 1 and 2, 159 in Years 3 to 6 and 59 in Years 7 and 8. Entry is mainly into the Nursery at the age of three or Reception at the age of 4. The EYFS and Years 1 and 2 occupy the pre-preparatory department building, with other year groups divided between the junior and senior departments. The majority of pupils move on to Merchant Taylors' School at the age of 13 years but some transfer to other independent schools or to local grammar schools.
- 1.4 The school is set in 35 acres, within a suburb of Northwood. Many pupils are from professional and business families from surrounding areas, with the remainder from a wider catchment area. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. All pupils are screened prior to entry and selected by academic ability. The school has identified 10 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and provides specialist support to these and three other pupils. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are 26 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and all are fluent, requiring no additional linguistic support.
- 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 pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional. Pupils of all needs and abilities, including the EYFS, are extremely successful in their learning. The school fully meets its aims to enable each boy to extend and develop his talents and interests so that he can grow in confidence and fulfil his potential. Pupils, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, make rapid progress. They benefit from an excellent broad and balanced curriculum, with exceptional achievements in extra-curricular activities across sport and drama, and notably in music. All pupils are able to take advantage of the many outdoor learning opportunities provided. The standard of teaching is excellent, with robust planning in place and strong in-class support.
- 2.2 The quality of personal development of all the pupils is excellent, reflecting the school's aims to create a friendly and caring atmosphere and high standards of behaviour. The anti-bullying policy, which encompasses cyber-bullying, is most effective. The school recognises that more work is required to improve consistency with the use of rewards and sanctions by all staff. The contribution of arrangements for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety is excellent, with comprehensive and robust procedures in place. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent, with an expectation of every boy to respect, value and appreciate the feelings and beliefs of others. The school's community links are very strong and significant charity fund raising is undertaken annually. The promotion of fundamental British values is embedded throughout the whole of the school.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. All board members have a clear, ambitious vision for the school's future. Governors know the school well through regular visits, including to the EYFS setting, and provide very strong support and challenge to the senior leadership team. The board discharges its statutory duties for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety extremely well. Leadership and management of the school are excellent. All managers are highly effective in self-evaluation and planning, which enable excellent standards to be maintained. A robust three-year development plan is in place, as well as strong financial strategic planning. The school has responded positively and successfully to the recommendations from the previous inspection. It has continued to maintain strong relationships with parents, who are highly positive about most aspects of the school's provision.

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

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

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

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Improve the consistency with which rewards and sanctions are used by all staff.
2. Ensure a consistent approach for the recording of children's next steps in the EYFS to inform future planning.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 All children in the EYFS, including those with SEND or EAL, make rapid progress in relation to their ability and starting points. By the end of Reception, the vast majority reach, and a high percentage exceed, the age-related Early Learning Goals.
- 3.3 Children are active learners who concentrate extremely well as they investigate and explore. They are able to think creatively and critically, while developing high levels of physical, communication and numeracy skills. All children in Reception can count to 20 and most are able to count beyond. They understand the concept of subtraction, and a number of children can subtract a single-digit number from a two-digit number, counting back with accuracy. The Nursery children demonstrate high levels of knowledge and independence as they explore and discuss shapes, patterns and numbers. All children communicate effectively and a high priority is given to the development of language skills throughout the setting. The Nursery children can use a range of tenses and were able to recall and describe shapes observed in the outdoor environment. Reception children were able to confidently construct imaginative written sentences to describe a teddy during a phonics lesson.
- 3.4 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims to enable each boy to extend and develop his talents and interests so that he can grow in confidence and fulfil his potential. Pupils demonstrate extremely high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum, including an excellent measure of success in extra-curricular activities.
- 3.5 Pupils are very proficient in English. They listen attentively and speak coherently. They have an extensive vocabulary, well in advance of the expectations for their age. Pupils are fluent writers and their presentation of work is of an extremely high standard. All pupils speak with great confidence and listen attentively to others. They engage in constructive dialogue with maturity and consideration.
- 3.6 Numeracy skills are extremely highly developed and are applied confidently to mathematical challenges set through a new practical mathematics curriculum. In Years 1 and 2 pupils investigate number thoroughly, while older pupils are able to display considerable understanding of complex mathematical concepts and problem solving using logical thought and creativity. In a Year 7 science lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to create different graphical designs in order to effectively present the relationship between planet temperatures and their distances from the sun using different plotting and estimation techniques.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate significant competence in information and communication technology (ICT) and confidently use a variety of programs from an early age. The introduction of new touch-screen laptops in the EYFS and Years 1 and 2 has further enhanced learning opportunities for research and investigation.
- 3.8 The exceptional success achieved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities makes a significant impact on pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Considerable success in art, drama and music reflects pupils' interests and develops their creativity. Many pupils have gained distinctions in music examinations and

participated successfully in school stage performances, with two pupils achieving lead roles at a national level in London.

- 3.9 Pupils' achievements in sport at both individual and team level are exceptional. They reach very high levels of achievement in national finals in rugby and regional events in hockey, athletics, cross-country and cricket. Pupils are very well educated in how to lead active and healthy lifestyles. They are very proud to represent their school in competitions.
- 3.10 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence seen in their work and their performance in lessons it is judged to be exceptional in relation to national age-related expectations. This is confirmed by analysis of the school's own assessment data, interviews with both staff and pupils, and consideration of the demanding curriculum that is provided. Pupils gain places at highly selective senior schools, with many achieving scholarships. Those with SEND or EAL attain exceptionally well because of the extensive support given by the school. Able, gifted and talented pupils attain distinction in academic work because the work set is highly challenging and extends their outstanding levels of ability. The introduction of problem-solving activities and participation in external competitions has further met the needs of the more able.
- 3.11 This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make an excellent rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability.
- 3.12 From the earliest age, pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and they are extremely productive in individual and collaborative work, valuing each other's support in lessons. Pupils feel comfortable to give constructive feedback to each other through assessment opportunities provided, and are well organised and motivated by achieving well with any challenge undertaken.
- 3.13 The recommendation from the previous inspection for teachers to plan opportunities for independent learning and research has been fully met.
- 3.14 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents were pleased with the excellent progress that their children make.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.16 In the EYFS, there is a highly effective balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning, both indoors and outdoors. The woodland learning environment provides valuable opportunities for children to think critically and solve problems. Reception children, for example, co-operated effectively when planning to move a wheelbarrow full of sand back to the sandpit.
- 3.17 The recent integration of new ICT provision in the EYFS has enhanced learning opportunities. Specialist teaching in French, music and physical education has a positive impact and encourages confidence through the early acquisition of language, musical and physical development skills.
- 3.18 A well-structured, comprehensive programme of links with the community enhances the curriculum, and during the inspection the Nursery children were visited by a local police dog-handling unit.

- 3.19 Across the school, the curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. Effective planning enables delivery of personal, social, health and economic education to an excellent standard. It successfully meets the school's aims to prepare every boy for each stage in his educational career, and to become a life-long learner.
- 3.20 In Years 1 and 2, the teachers are responsible for planning and teaching the majority of academic subjects, with inputs from some specialist teachers. As pupils progress up the school the curriculum is increasingly taught by subject specialists, who provide wide-ranging expertise which directly and positively impacts upon the learning and progress of all pupils. In Year 5, drama is added to the curriculum, as is Latin in Year 6. Where they occur, the setting and grouping of pupils enable staff to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all age groups and abilities. In Year 7 pupils are setted by ability for certain subjects. In Year 8 they are streamed by ability. These arrangements enable the school effectively to prepare all individuals for the next stage of their education.
- 3.21 The provision for the more able pupils and those with SEND or EAL is excellent. The curriculum is well adjusted to meet their needs and offered in a way that enables them to make progress in line with their peers. Able, gifted and talented pupils are challenged through extension exercises provided in activities and are very well prepared for scholarship examinations.
- 3.22 Music, art, sport and technology feature strongly in the curriculum. The provision of games and sports is excellent, and pupils have a busy schedule of matches against other schools and many additional opportunities to participate in physical pursuits. The curriculum is fully supported by an extensive extra-curricular activities programme. Pupils have opportunities to take part in an extremely comprehensive, wide variety of activities, ranging from gardening to golf, orchestra, guitar and computing. The school provides over 50 clubs and after-school activities, which are greatly appreciated by the high numbers of pupils participating.
- 3.23 Pupils' education is enhanced by an excellent range of trips. During an annual week of activities, pupils take part in a variety of residential visits. Year 2 and Year 4 attend activity-based trips in Guildford and Lichfield, Year 6 visit Northumberland, Year 7 travel to France and Year 8 go to an adventure camp. All these opportunities build self-confidence.
- 3.24 There are many links with the local community. Visits are made to the regional Royal National Institute of Blind People school and a local care home to entertain the residents. Year 8 pupils perform community service as part of their post-examination programme. Local authors visit the school, parents talk to pupils about different religions and nearby places of worship are visited. The school hosts local schools for sports festivals and design and technology workshops. It ensures that the curriculum offered and the visiting speaker programme provide a good balance of opposing views when debating political and other topics and are non-partisan in nature.
- 3.25 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils felt that the school provides a good range of curricular and extra-curricular activities and an appropriate choice of subjects. The school's very successful record of pupils' entry into selective senior schools reflects the effectiveness of its preparation of the pupils for the next stages in their educational careers.

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

- 3.26 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.27 The EYFS provides a highly stimulating environment, in line with the school's aims. Committed and caring staff use highly effective planning to ensure that each child's unique needs and interests are considered, with the result that all children, including the most able, are suitably challenged.
- 3.28 Early Years Foundation Stage assessments are a regular and accurate reflection of each child's achievement. On some occasions, however, the recording and subsequent tracking of children's next steps for learning are inconsistent across the setting. Children have access to a wide range of high quality resources, providing a wealth of spontaneous opportunities that enable them to make excellent progress in all areas of learning.
- 3.29 Adults have consistently high expectations and excellent knowledge in promoting and supporting the children's learning and development, through varied challenges for creative and critical thinking and active encouragement during open-ended questioning. During multi-sensory play, for example, children explored the properties of glitter foam and gained a very good understanding of how to mould and shape it. Reception children created a rocket during a phonics lesson, referring to a list of resources they had agreed and written themselves as part of a national science week.
- 3.30 Throughout Years 1 to 8, high quality teaching engages and motivates pupils, enabling them to progress rapidly in their learning. Information from assessment data is used most effectively to inform planning in meeting pupils' individual needs and to monitor progress and attainment. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, who respond with enthusiasm and actively engage in lessons. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a passion for learning, which result in a highly stimulating atmosphere. The strong relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves ensure a highly effective and positive working environment where all individuals support each other.
- 3.31 Teaching is carefully planned and purposefully organised, with very effective management of time. In most lessons observed, teachers gave clear guidance from the outset and this enabled pupils to understand the learning objectives and engage immediately from the start of the lesson. Lessons include a suitable range of teaching styles to extend the pupils' learning and to support and meet the needs of pupils of varying abilities, including those with SEND or EAL and the able, gifted and talented.
- 3.32 The most successful teaching reflects skilful questioning to engage and challenge all pupils, and to foster interest and independence. Opportunities are provided for collaborative learning and peer assessment. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own organisation and to take risks without fear of making mistakes. Teachers and pupils have access to excellent, up-to-date resources including a well-equipped ICT suite, interactive whiteboards and laptops. In a Year 4 geography lesson, pupils were actively engaged in the use of interactive software that enabled them to research geographical sites based upon historical information from Iron Age settlements.
- 3.33 With minor exceptions marking and assessment are constructive, with corrections clearly indicated. Excellent practice in some lessons involved pupils evaluating their

own work with teachers. At times, more able pupils assisted those less able on independent challenges set, which helped them to recognise the criteria for success.

- 3.34 Teaching promotes tolerance and respect and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues, ensuring that balanced viewpoints are provided. Teachers promote equality, respect and tolerance, and maintain a vibrant atmosphere that helps pupils to flourish.
- 3.35 The school has responded fully to the recommendations of the previous inspection to ensure that teachers consistently build into their planning opportunities for independent learning and research.
- 3.36 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils felt that teachers help them to learn. This view was confirmed by both parents and pupils in discussions with inspectors.

## **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 the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the EYFS a highly successful range of strategies has been implemented that encourages children to co-operate, take turns and behave very well. All children respond positively to the embedded culture of encouragement, respect and praise. In Reception, children strive to do their best and earn merit badges and 'golden time'. All EYFS children are encouraged to participate in whole-school charitable events, raising their awareness of the differences between their own needs and the needs of others. British values are actively promoted in the EYFS. Children are taught about fairness and understand the differences between right and wrong through many play activities. They are encouraged to make choices and respect the opinions of others. For example, Nursery children voted for which story they would like to hear, and Reception children explored how to respect and listen to each other's ideas during 'circle time'. Festivals from many cultures are celebrated and have recently included Chinese New Year and St Patrick's Day. The careful deployment of staff and the close links that have been created throughout the school ensure that all children are exceptionally well prepared for their transitions within the school.
- 4.3 The aims of St John's are very well met, enabling each boy to extend and develop his talents and interests in a community where he feels safe, secure and valued. The pupils are reflective of the school motto "be true to yourself".
- 4.4 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent and demonstrates high standards of behaviour and courtesy. Pupils value the enriching opportunity that assemblies provide for reflection, such as the Sports Relief assembly. Pupils' personal reflection was seen in a Year 5 lesson on the pupil-devised code of conduct, showing self-awareness when considering their own actions and the impact of these on others.
- 4.5 Pupils develop excellent moral awareness, and have a strong sense of right and wrong. They abide by the school's code of conduct, prominently displayed around the school. They understand that they should treat people without discrimination. Pupils' concern and compassion are expressed as they proactively seek to improve the lives of those less fortunate in both local and international situations through their extremely successful charity fund raising.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent, with all greeting each other, staff and visitors politely. Pupils develop self-confidence and self-esteem through performing for their peers, such as in a school play, taking part in sports teams, or participating in choral or orchestral groups, reinforcing the school's strong sense of community.
- 4.7 Pupils develop their confidence through assuming responsibilities in roles such as playtime carers in Year 2, 'buddies' in Year 4, members of the school and eco-councils or house prefects in Year 8. Pupils in Years 3 to 8 belong to a house system that promotes perseverance and effort.
- 4.8 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. The diverse school community supports understanding of cultural differences and develops global awareness. Artistic displays heighten learning, alongside an extremely rich programme of drama and musical productions that combine to broaden pupils' aesthetic experiences of

the arts. Opportunity to participate in residential trips and an exceptionally diverse range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' social skills, self-confidence and maturity.

- 4.9 Pupils are part of the culture of respect and tolerance that permeates the school and understand that it includes those of faiths and cultures different from their own. Pupils learn to appreciate the need for rules, from 'golden rules' at school to the laws that govern and protect citizens. Activities such as electing a school council, a visit from the local MP and trips to the Houses of Parliament enable pupils to understand democracy. Pupils have opportunities to respect the civil and criminal law of England through a visiting speakers' programme covering the emergency services and seminars on the appropriate use of social media and the internet. Pupils are also given opportunities to learn about the world of work, for example through business enterprise presentations.
- 4.10 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent by the time they leave the school. Their confidence, intellectual curiosity and extremely well-developed personalities allow them to express themselves clearly and with maturity. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

- 4.11 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.12 All children in the EYFS are assigned a key person who nurtures their development through exceptionally warm and supportive interactions and positive, trusting relationships with their families. Adults know the children extremely well, enabling them to offer support tailored to all children's unique needs and ensuring that they feel safe and secure.
- 4.13 Children display significantly high levels of independence and learn how to lead healthy lifestyles when attending to their own personal needs. When preparing for lunch Nursery children automatically wash their hands before organising their own food containers, and Reception children dress themselves appropriately to go outdoors. There are excellent opportunities for children to engage in physical exercise. Nursery children enjoy riding on tricycles and sit and ride these and other vehicles in their dedicated free-flow area, and Reception children develop their motor skills by exploring the adventure play equipment and extensive outdoor areas at playtimes.
- 4.14 The staff provide very effective support and guidance for the pupils, in accordance with the school's aims to ensure that every boy feels safe, secure and valued. Form tutors and class teachers know their pupils extremely well. Dedicated tutor periods provide ample opportunities for pupils to confide in their tutors, whilst 'worry and suggestions' boxes are readily available in classrooms. Pastoral concerns are entered on to the secure school database by staff who then monitor and track these closely, with senior managers providing updates to staff at weekly pastoral briefings.
- 4.15 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. A dynamic house system provides friendly competition in a wide range of activities and promotes collegiality amongst all classes from Years 3 to 8. Senior pupils routinely support activities with the younger age groups.
- 4.16 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils felt that their opinions are not heard or listened to. Inspectors discussed these concerns with

pupils, parents and staff. They found that an overwhelming majority of pupils across all year groups are very positive about the current systems in place for providing a pupil voice and that pupils have ample opportunities to raise any ideas or concerns as necessary.

- 4.17 Class representatives have regular meetings with senior management. The school council and eco-council promote purposeful pupil interaction, such as drawing up the school's code of conduct. Other initiatives have included the introduction of reversible games shirts in house colours, demonstrating how pupils play an active part in the development and shaping of the school community.
- 4.18 All pupils are expected to respect, value and appreciate the feelings and beliefs of others. The school is highly effective at promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying and harassment of any kind. Pupils clearly understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is not tolerated and report that incidence is very low at the school.
- 4.19 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils expressed concerns about the inconsistent use of rewards and sanctions by teachers. Inspectors discussed these concerns with a range of year groups, who confirmed these views. Staff confirmed that more work to improve consistency of the use of rewards and sanctions needs to be undertaken in the school.
- 4.20 The pastoral needs for pupils with SEND or EAL are highly effectively met through supportive strategies that maintain self-belief and aspiration, and for gifted and talented pupils through extension tasks that promote self-esteem.
- 4.21 The school has a suitable plan to improve further the educational access for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.22 Active promotion of healthy eating and lifestyles is supported by nutritious and well-balanced school meals, and by the excellent provision of activities and the opportunity to learn in the extensive school grounds.

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

- 4.23 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.24 Careful attention is given to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and a comprehensive policy is implemented effectively throughout the school, from the EYFS onwards. All staff, including governors, have undergone child protection training and have also read and understood *Keeping Children Safe In Education* part 1. Staff responsible for recruitment have received safer recruitment training, which has ensured that the checks required prior to appointment have been undertaken and accurately recorded on the single central register. A named governor for safeguarding works closely with designated teachers who maintain excellent working relationships with appropriate external agencies. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers felt that their children are happy and feel safe at the school.
- 4.25 All policies and procedures relating to welfare, health and safety are in place, implemented and regularly reviewed. They include appropriate and effective procedures to prevent radicalisation or extremism, with regular update training undertaken by all staff, including governors.

- 4.26 All measures have been taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, with meticulous arrangements for practical safety within the whole of the school. Fire drills are held regularly. The health and safety committee meets regularly and ensures that there is a comprehensive framework for the review and monitoring of risk assessments, including those for trips and visits across all year groups.
- 4.27 Appropriate staff ratios are in place for external trips undertaken, with appropriate first-aid trained staff for the relevant age group. Staff training in first aid is updated regularly. The maintenance of buildings and the estate infrastructure is of a very high standard. The estates team effectively monitors the daily drop off and collection of pupils. There are well-equipped medical rooms covering all departments of the school, with meticulous procedures in place for the recording of accidents and illnesses and the provision of medication.
- 4.28 Admission and attendance registers are carefully maintained, stored appropriately and readily accessible. Registration of pupils takes place in an efficient manner, and any absences are quickly followed up and recorded by school staff. Records concerning the welfare of any pupils are stored securely and centrally. The welfare of those pupils with SEND is managed with appropriate care.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body is very successful in supporting the school in its mission to achieve excellence and helping pupils to fulfil their potential.
- 5.3 The governors have an excellent insight into the workings of the school and a clear vision for its future. They attend a wide range of meetings and events, and are seen as an integral part of the school community. A governor with specific responsibility for the EYFS ensures that high standards are maintained. The governors are highly effective in discharging their responsibilities for financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources.
- 5.4 Governors bring a valuable range of expertise to the board and have a wide range of skills relevant to their roles. They recruit new members in line with identified priorities and support from the Merchant Taylors' Educational Trust. The board is informed by timely and comprehensive reports through a robust sub-committee framework. The governing body provides excellent support and challenge to the headmaster.
- 5.5 Governors are very effective at discharging their legal responsibilities for child protection, welfare, and health and safety, and maintain an oversight of policies and procedures. Regular contact with designated leaders by a named governor for safeguarding ensures close monitoring of arrangements and oversight of the board's annual safeguarding review. All governors have received safeguarding training and other professional development appropriate to their roles.
- 5.6 Governors have responded very well to recommendations from the previous inspection and through restructuring of the governing body have improved their overall effectiveness in achieving further improvements at the school.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.8 In the EYFS there is a highly effective management structure that enables a clear and ambitious vision for the future development of the provision.
- 5.9 The leadership team has responded effectively to the recommendation of the previous inspection, ensuring that a comprehensive and thorough EYFS development plan, incorporating all the areas of learning, is now in place.
- 5.10 Monitoring of the EYFS provision is rigorous and priorities for development are identified and implemented. The impact of strategies for improvement is measured through a highly effective annual cycle of self-evaluation. Staff supervision sessions are regularly carried out and are highly effective in supporting the development and maintenance of excellent practice. These ensure continuous professional development for all staff.

- 5.11 The safeguarding of children is carefully assured in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. Partnerships with parents, carers and agencies are very strong, resulting in appropriate and timely interventions for those children and their families who require support. The school actively promotes core British values and equality.
- 5.12 Communication with EYFS parents and carers is excellent and highly constructive in supporting each child's unique learning and development needs. Reporting arrangements for parents are detailed and informative, whilst providing clear targets for improvement. Parents are actively encouraged to support their children's learning at home through the provision of information relating to the teaching of current topics and themes. The 'topic box' initiative developed in Reception has provided an excellent opportunity for parents to support their children through the effective sharing and linking of ideas between home and school.
- 5.13 The leadership and management of the school are most effective, in accordance with the aims of the school to provide a stimulating environment to enable each boy to develop his talents, grow in confidence and fulfil his potential. School leaders ensure that each pupil is provided with appropriate support and guidance so that he can develop a positive and self-disciplined approach to learning and life.
- 5.14 The senior leadership team provides clear educational direction that enables excellent standards to be achieved. A robust framework for the monitoring and review of policies and procedures is in place. Excellent communication is maintained through regular meetings and briefings to staff, further enhanced by a securely accessible information management database.
- 5.15 The school is successful in its aim to ensure that every boy feels safe, secure and valued, and to create a friendly and caring atmosphere. High standards of behaviour are expected from every boy, and are supported by an effective pastoral framework. The school's values, which were developed by the school council, encourage respect for others and democracy, and underpin the school's ethos. Systems for pre-appointment recruitment checks and the suitability of staff and governors comply with safer recruitment legislation and are robustly followed. The senior leadership team successfully recruits and retains suitably qualified staff and ensures that they all have received update training in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety.
- 5.16 All managers are highly effective in self-evaluation and planning, and follow up issues promptly. Increased involvement by middle managers has led to regular departmental reviews, encompassing lesson observations, work scrutiny and brief collaborative visits around the school to monitor educational outcomes. A highly effective appraisal scheme is in place for all staff, with individual staff appraisal targets closely linked to the priorities set within the school's development plan. This development plan is reviewed regularly by the senior leadership team and updated to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the school. It provides a key template for the future direction of the school. Progress is regularly reported by the senior leadership team at the monthly full governing body meeting.
- 5.17 The academic policy committee meets once a week and is highly effective in reviewing the academic standards of the school. Regular reporting to the committee covers updates on the quality of teaching and learning, standards of pupils' work, pupil progress tracking and curriculum developments.

- 5.18 The senior leadership team, supported by all staff, has successfully implemented the recommendations from the previous inspection. Delegated responsibilities within both the senior leadership team and the middle management tiers of departmental heads, subject leaders and co-ordinators are discharged very effectively.
- 5.19 A generous budget allows for effective continuous professional development, both in providing external training which is cascaded back to colleagues or making use of the two non-pupil days before each term allocated for whole-school training. Sharing of good practice regularly takes place between and within departments, and managers are highly successful in developing and motivating high quality staff. Initiatives undertaken by staff have included the promotion of wider opportunities for independent study and the enhancement of learning with the use of tablet computers.
- 5.20 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers expressed very high satisfaction with the quality of education and support provided to their children. During the inspection, parents and carers spoke very positively about how the school makes them feel part of a shared community. The vast majority also stated that they feel involved with school events through invitations to school concerts, plays and sports fixtures, and volunteering on school trips.
- 5.21 Excellent communication is maintained through *The Lamb* weekly newsletter, homework diaries, the parent portal and regular opportunities to meet with teachers. The introduction of a director of communications role has been highly influential in this regard. The St John's Association is proactive and is an excellent conduit between the school and the parent body. Funds raised have contributed significantly to school amenities, including the provision of minibuses and enabling improvement to the pre-prep library.
- 5.22 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with all the statutory required information from the school. Parental concerns are dealt with promptly and thoroughly, and in accordance with the school's published procedures. During the inspection parents spoke warmly of the 'open door' policy of the school and how well and lucidly concerns receive consideration.
- 5.23 In discussions with inspectors, parents and carers commended the quality of reports, which include targets and constructive developmental comments on their children's work and progress, whilst celebrating their individual achievement. This view was supported by inspection evidence.

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