



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Hallfield School

February 2019



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School's Details

School	Hallfield School			
DfE number	330/6004			
Early Years registration number	257164			
Registered charity number	528956			
Address	Church Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 3SJ			
Telephone number	0121 454 1496			
Email address	office@hallfieldschool.co.uk			
Head Master	Mr Keith Morrow			
Chair of governors	Mr Keith Uff			
Age range	0 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	549			
	Boys	317	Girls	232
	EYFS	204	Juniors	345
Inspection dates	12 to 14 February 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Hallfield School is an independent co-educational day school, for boys and girls, aged between three months and eleven years. Founded in 1879, the school has been governed by the Hallfield School Trust since 1959. The current Head Master joined the school in September 2018.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has altered its leadership arrangements, expanding the executive team to include the director of finance and operations, as well as the human resources manager. Head of department and head of year roles have been reviewed, and pupil leadership responsibilities have been introduced. Development projects have included an extension to the school day, as well as refurbished facilities for outdoor learning and dining.
- 1.3 The school is organised into two sections. The Pre-Prep is for pupils up to the age of seven years and includes Hallfield*first*, the registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, for children between the ages of three months and two years. Pupils between the ages of seven and eleven attend The Prep.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide a safe, caring, happy and high-achieving culture, which is based on Christian principles, whilst welcoming children of all faiths and none. It intends for each child to develop a love of learning, and to reach their academic, cultural and sporting potential. The school also endeavours to instil, within all pupils, the social and emotional capacity to become resilient, courteous and compassionate members of a community.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from British Indian, British Pakistani and white British families, the majority of whom live within a 12-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the school is above average. The school has identified 32 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, six of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan (EHC) or a statement of SEND. A minority of pupils experience a different language at home, and one pupil receives additional support for English as an additional language (EAL). The curriculum is modified for pupils identified as more able.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 2.20 Children under two make good progress in relation to their starting points; they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Excellent care and planning meets the needs of all children. They are happy, secure and safe, within a nurturing family environment. Requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met. Staff work as an effective team, sharing their understanding and responsibilities in protecting the children in their care. Leaders evaluate practice to improve children's learning. Although some progress has been made, the recommendations from the previous inspection have not been fully implemented.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.21 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.
- 2.22 Leaders have high expectations for the children. Staff share an ambitious vision, continuously striving to improve the level of care within the setting. Suitable systems are implemented to ensure that provision meets the children's needs. Well-documented professional development procedures help staff in aspects of their roles, particularly in sourcing external training to enhance their qualifications. Staff have received beneficial training to promote children's physical development, which has enhanced their expertise in fostering children's welfare. Support and coaching for staff to improve the learning and outcomes for children has not been as effective. As a result, staff occasionally overlook opportunities to interact with children, such as while they are waiting for their lunch.
- 2.23 Leaders routinely evaluate provision, taking into account the views of parents and key workers, together with the needs of the children. Parents are encouraged to share their views. Communication between them and staff has improved in response to parents' comments in a recent survey. Inspectors learned that parents are very happy with the care that their children receive. They appreciate the more frequent exchange of information about their child's interests to improve curriculum planning. Children benefit from a broad curriculum and a wide range of experiences that prepare them for the next stage in their learning. Their readiness for school is promoted when they experience being part of the whole school, such as when they are spectators during the sports day activities. The leadership has established suitable links with external specialists to assist in meeting children's needs. Learning programmes meet all the EYFS learning and development requirements. Staff demonstrate high expectations of children's behaviour. They gently distract them when necessary, through the use of songs, rhymes and toys. Children are encouraged to share and to be kind to one another. Equality, diversity, as well as British values of respect and tolerance, are displayed and practised throughout the setting. Children under the age of two are involved in charity days, such as when they enjoy dressing up in spotty clothes for a national fundraising event.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.24 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 2.25 Staff have a secure understanding of how to implement the EYFS requirements for the pupils under the age of two. For example, they encourage babies who can sit to gain confidence in reaching for their favourite toys. The setting has made progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection, although staff still miss opportunities to promote children's independent thinking skills through open-ended questioning. With the support and encouragement of key people, children develop their motor skills, such as when they play with balls and hoops. There are fewer activities that challenge more able children to learn by investigating when they are in the outdoor area.

- 2.26 Parents provide comprehensive details about their children when they first register at the school; the setting is pro-active in communicating with any previous provider. This information is used to plan suitable individualised learning activities for all children. Resources meet the needs of the children; staff adjust them during the day as children's interests develop. Assessment information is used successfully to plan teaching and learning strategies that support each child's next steps in learning. Staff monitor children's progress through routine observations and adjust planning to sustain their good progress. Children are enabled to master their targets, since staff judge effectively when to intervene and demonstrate activities. For example, children were successful in completing a puzzle because staff encouraged them to 'twist' the shape to see if it would fit. Carefully chosen activities, together with the expertise of key people, help children achieve well over time, progressing to the next stage of learning. Staff facilitate children's move into the Pre-Prep with great sensitivity.
- 2.27 Parents are actively involved in the curriculum focus areas, continuing learning activities at home. The wealth of information for parents includes a welcome booklet and an online newsletter. Staff are accessible to parents at drop-off and pick-up times. This communication is complemented by a daily two-way diary in which parents and staff exchange information about the child's experiences and routines. Communication with home is further promoted, since some staff speak the first language of parents and grandparents. In addition to induction meetings, parents are invited to two parent evenings a year, with an opportunity to talk with staff about the two-year developmental check. They are able to join in the stay and play workshops, as well as the open mornings. Festivals that are meaningful to the children are celebrated by decorating rooms and organising special activities, such as making diva lamps during Diwali.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.28 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.29 Staff care extremely well for all children and create a positive culture, where each child is valued. Relationships are strong and children actively seek out their key person for reassurance and guidance. Children are totally engaged in their activities, variously dancing and singing as they concentrate, demonstrating an enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning. Babies who are mobile are encouraged to feel proud of their achievements. For example, they receive praise when they try to feed themselves and drink independently. Staff encourage children as they learn new skills, creating a positive culture that enables children to become successful learners. Children grow in confidence when making their requests known, such as when they want to stop eating. Children develop independence and confidence in their physical capabilities, such as when staff reassure them while they carefully negotiate a path by stepping over objects.
- 2.30 Staff promote children's physical and emotional health, encouraging the children to build loving bonds with their key people, so that they are secure in their company. Key people are caring and supportive at sleep times, stroking children to help them relax and fall asleep. They reassure parents when children are anxious on arriving at the setting for the first time. Staff take great care to ensure that children only move to their next room when they are emotionally ready. Children are extremely well prepared to do so, since sufficient time is allowed for them and their parents to adjust to a new environment, and to build positive relationships.
- 2.31 Robust sign-in procedures ensure an accurate record of attendance. Absences are promptly followed up and staff keep in regular contact with home when children are absent. The behaviour policy is consistently applied throughout the setting. It mirrors the *Children's' Charter*, which is followed throughout the school. Adults are calm and positive role models, who reinforce expectations, and help children manage their feelings and personal behaviour. As a result, children are learning to understand rules, such as those for keeping them safe. They know how to walk carefully down the steps using the hand rail; they are reminded to chew slowly to avoid choking hazards. All staff have received internet safety training; parents are made aware of the risks posed by the internet and social media. A healthy life style is promoted through the provision of freshly-prepared snacks. Staff talk to the children about

the food that they are eating. Young babies are encouraged to try new food with different textures and tastes. Children play outdoors even when wet, wearing suitable clothing, so they get as much fresh air as possible. They communicate when they are tired; staff talk to them gently when it is time to sleep. Staff continuously encourage children to respect and care for one another. Children take turns during group activities and are reminded of the importance of listening to each other. They are shown how to consider the feelings of others, as well as how to soothe a child they have been unkind to. Children discuss festivals and friendships, as well as the different makeup of families.

Outcomes for children

2.32 Outcomes for children are good.

2.33 All children make good progress from their different starting points, acquiring ample knowledge and skills, which are well informed by parents and by the focused observations of key people. Children's investigative skills are less well developed, since there are fewer opportunities for them to explore their interests independently. Children are happy, confident and friendly learners, who thrive in their family rooms, and develop strong bonds with their carers. They listen well and follow instructions. For example, they take their shoes off independently when asked to do so. They remember routines as part of a community, attempting to put on their boots before going outside and using sign language to show that they are ready to march, when modelled by their key person. Children begin to count as they sing rhymes and go down steps. They can recognise and say the names of colours. Children feel confident about choosing their own resources and exploring their environment. They learn how to lay a table in their role play, and practise using a knife and fork.

2.34 Children learn strategies for managing their own feelings and caring for others, such as patting the back of another child who is upset. Young toddlers experience a great sense of achievement in mastering new skills, such as carefully walking down a long flight of stairs, with the support of their key person. Children are aware of the need to keep safe. For example, they guide an adult's hand on to the bannisters to ensure that they too are descending safely. Pupils develop good habits and show independence to feed themselves successfully, with spoons and in pulling out their own chairs at the start of a meal. They begin to understand the need for personal hygiene during hand-washing, tooth-brushing and nappy changing sessions. Behaviour is excellent because staff have high expectations of the children.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years:

- Ensure that the outdoor learning area creates a stimulating environment, which enables children to become investigative learners.
- Improve support and coaching, so that staff take advantage of every opportunity to engage with children and further aid their development.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Pre-Prep	Key Stage 1 including the EYFS
The Prep	Key Stage 2

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- A high proportion of pupils are successful in earning scholarships, against strong competition, for local senior schools.
- Many pupils make rapid progress, especially pupils with SEND and children moving through the EYFS.
- Most pupils' linguistic and communication skills are excellent. They think deeply and talk intelligently about various topics.
- Pupils use their excellent academic skills effectively, including when playing chess to an exceptionally high standard.
- Pupils are extremely diligent and committed to achieving academic success.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils are quietly self-assured and remarkably self-disciplined in pursuing their goals.
- Pupils take a leading role in determining the culture of the school through the implementation of the *Children's Charter*, which guides their sensitive relationships with one another.
- Pupils have great respect for the diversity of the school community. They honour their own religious backgrounds, whilst being sincerely interested in understanding the beliefs of others.
- Pupils are extremely collaborative in creating effective teams for academic, house and sporting events.
- Pupils have high levels of emotional maturity, giving careful consideration to supporting one another, as well as to helping those less fortunate than themselves.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Strengthen pupils' study skills by ensuring consistent opportunities for them to apply their knowledge in a way which enhances their understanding, including for children in the EYFS.
- Improve the speaking skills of pupils in the EYFS still further by linking these to the other languages that they are learning at home.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils' academic development culminates most successfully in the very significant proportion of Prep pupils awarded scholarships for their chosen local secondary school against strong competition. These achievements reflect the leadership's care in preparing pupils for the selection processes. In this respect, the school fulfils its aim to provide a high achieving culture. Equally, pupils are keen to subscribe to the school's chess playing traditions. By their second term, pupils in Year 1 are able to compete successfully with one another because of the expert coaching they receive. Pupils representing the school have secured its extremely high national ranking, with several players representing the county and achieving national honours. The school's under 11 and under 13 chess teams are also extremely successful in national competitions.
- 3.6 Pupils are resolute in developing the knowledge and skills necessary for academic success. Their linguistic skills are of a particularly high quality and pupils are adept communicators. Pupils throughout the school speak calmly and intelligently because they are so often invited to give their views unprompted in teaching and during assemblies. They read well, this skill enhanced by several reading projects in which pupils receive targeted support in small groups. Children in the EYFS quickly develop good habits for interpreting plot as they listen to stories, because teaching encourages them to empathise with the characters' experience. Pupils are knowledgeable about the conventions of writing. Those in the Pre-Prep are familiar with literary devices, explaining the difference between similes and synonyms, and Prep pupils write expertly for different purposes. They have a sophisticated understanding of how to impact the reader, for example in writing ambiguously to sustain mystery. Many pupils excel in extra-curricular writing, either through the newly launched school news periodical or in national young writers' competitions. This is due to leadership's actions in ensuring a wide range of extra-curricular activities are available for Prep pupils. Occasionally, pupils' writing is limited to factual recording and this belies their appreciable skill in thinking more deeply about human and social influences. Pupils are alert to the linguistic relationship between languages. For example, older pupils in the Pre-Prep easily alternated between English and Spanish vocabulary, and those in The Prep applied their understanding of word roots to read bilingual text successfully. A few children in the EYFS do not develop their speaking skills to the same high level as they achieve in other areas of learning. This is because teaching does not make clear for them the distinction between the sounds of their home language and those of English. The EYFS leadership has identified this aspect of the curriculum for development as a result of actions taken in response to the recommendation from the previous inspection; improvement planning is now well informed by monitoring and self-evaluation arrangements.
- 3.7 Pupils are proficient mathematicians. Children in the EYFS develop good skills in mathematics, applying their knowledge throughout the areas of learning. They incorporate numbers in their artistic designs and then take care to keep a tally as they complete them. More able children understand how to double numbers because well-planned teaching encourages them to match identical patterns, for example, designing a ladybird with equal numbers of dots on each wing. Pupils in Pre-Prep develop considerable mathematical agility, recognising the link between the five times table and the numbers on a clock face. They recognise how numbers apply in other subjects because the Pre-Prep curriculum skilfully integrates various academic disciplines. For example, pupils in Year 2 use a scale to compare actual with predicted volumes in science. Pupils in The Prep spend much of their time developing the mathematical proficiency necessary for examination success. This is because the curriculum is adjusted to afford intense preparation for these tests. Once completed, pupils broaden their understanding by undertaking more investigative tasks. A very high proportion of pupils achieve excellent results in the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust Challenge, and several Prep pupils successfully complete the intermediate test for secondary age pupils.

- 3.8 Pupils' scientific knowledge is extensive; those in the Pre-Prep confidently describe materials within their own experiences as either opaque or transparent. More able pupils in The Prep draw well-reasoned conclusions, such as how polyacrylate works in term of polymerisation, because of expert questioning in teaching. Pupils have many opportunities to refine their practical skills in conducting scientific experiments. Throughout the school, pupils develop the ability to use information and communication technology as a tool to aid their learning because the curriculum is well resourced. Pre-Prep pupils confidently engage with games to reinforce their understanding; The Prep pupils more commonly use programmes that support other areas of the curriculum, such as in practising mathematical procedures and presenting written work in English. Pupils are competent researchers, accessing the internet to find geographical and historical detail. Older Prep pupils develop additional technological skill in using sophisticated equipment for more precision in learning, for example, using temperature sensors for more accurate readings in scientific experiments.
- 3.9 Pupils' physical skills are good. A high proportion of children in the EYFS exceed the expected standards for physical control and co-ordination and many children have passed pre-primary dance awards. Pupils in the Pre-Prep understand the purpose of a physical warm up, contrasting cardiovascular activities with dynamic stretches. The introduction of a creative element in the curriculum means pupils in The Prep use their physical skill artistically such as in choreography and they compete enthusiastically in sports events. Cross country running is popular, and the school squad includes regional champions. Sports teams have achieved success in local football, hockey and basketball competitions because of the school's commitment to community representation. A few pupils are exceedingly effective cricketers and accomplished in the martial arts. Individual musicians play with excellent phrasing and intonation and pupils have been selected for city orchestras and choirs. Most pupils enjoy singing and perform on stage with great wit and clarity; some have developed their acting skills further to achieve success in LAMDA examinations.
- 3.10 Pupils' high achievement is testament to their very mature attitudes to learning. Pupils are extremely diligent and committed to success: they are highly organised, and they settle quickly to learning activities because teaching is well organised. This is as a result of improved monitoring by the leadership to ensure teaching is consistently effective. Children begin to develop effective study skills in the EYFS; for example, in using the tools on the interactive board, estimating and frequently re-adjusting the size of the pen nib to colour in various shapes efficiently. Children use their initiative as effective staff training has led to greater flexibility in teaching to promote children's interests. This is still a little inconsistent and occasionally, pupils in the EYFS learn by being told what to do rather than by finding out for themselves. Pupils' higher order thinking skills emerge most frequently in the many discussions they enjoy as they learn together. They have fewer opportunities for recording these more sophisticated ideas in writing. A few pupils indicated in the questionnaire that they did not agree that lessons were interesting. The inspectors found that teaching was occasionally less stimulating because, at times, it focused on the sustained practice and disciplined routines for editing and redrafting written work necessary for examination success. Pupils are well aware of what they need to do to achieve because of the provision of targets and development plans from an early age.
- 3.11 Children develop quickly in the Nursery and their attainment is already above average by the time they enter Reception. They continue to sustain this progress and their attainment at the end of the EYFS is above the level expected for children at this age. This is as a result of the leadership's response in addressing the recommendation from the previous inspection to ensure that all activities match the children's individual needs. The progress of pupils throughout the school is good in relation to those of similar above average ability. Pupils are frequently tested to monitor their academic performance, and the school's assessment information indicates that progress is well sustained. The leadership's meticulous approach to scrutinising assessment information ensures pupils remain on track to achieve high standards. Pupils with SEND are beginning to make more rapid progress than their peers in order to attain in line or above expectations, especially in reading. This is because new leaders have improved coordination in communicating the most effective support for individual pupils.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 The pupils' excellent personal development is founded on their shared commitment to the *Children's Charter*, which is a set of guiding principles established by the pupils in discussion with staff. The consequences of this emphasis on considerate behaviour means that the pupils develop the social and emotional capacity to think and act on the behalf of others. The school is extremely successful in fulfilling its aims to provide a happy and secure environment, and to promote in pupils the ability to be compassionate citizens.
- 3.14 Pupils display excellent social skills, working highly effectively with others. Children in the EYFS quickly understand how to play their part in completing a group task. Group work is a key feature of successful learning in the Pre-Prep, where pupils develop good habits for taking it in turns to listen to one another's contributions. Pupils in The Prep acquire a great sense of common endeavour as they strive together for victory in regular house competitions. They are perceptive about the social dynamics in achieving a common goal, recognising that they need to work in partnership with adults to bring their plans to fruition. For instance, school council members collaborated with staff in redesigning the layout of the library. This is also a consequence of governor leadership in improving the pupils' learning environment. The vast majority of pupils make a positive contribution to the school. Pupil leaders understand that they have been appointed to fulfil a broader role in the community. They develop great skill in managing the preferences of others as they organise teams for house events. Pupils embrace their responsibility for others in the local community and wider society. For example, they regularly donate to a local food bank; they told inspectors that they thought charitable acts should prevail over time. They are compassionate and take a keen interest in global events, as evidenced in their recent support for a Nepalese community that was devastated by an earthquake.
- 3.15 Pupils have the utmost respect for the cultural differences between them, appreciative of the very diverse nature of the school community, whilst championing inclusivity. They are proud of their own religious backgrounds; they are interested in understanding the beliefs of others, such as how religious observance is revealed in clothing and diet. In the questionnaire responses, almost all pupils agreed that the school helps them respect one another, although a small minority disagreed that the school treats them fairly. Inspection evidence found that the introduction of co-ordinated leadership structures, especially through heads of year and heads of department, has led to more equal support for all pupils' academic development and pastoral needs.
- 3.16 The pupils recommended improvements to the *Children's Charter* when they recognised that it served only as a guide for their relationships with others. Thus, features now include reminders to promote pupils' self-awareness. Key to these tenets are the pupils' responsibilities in safeguarding their own wellbeing. Children in the EYFS understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy, since well-established hygiene routines are integral to effective teaching. For example, they know when to use antibacterial hand gel. They identify healthy snack options, contrasting fruit with biscuits. Pupils in the Pre-Prep recognise how factors combine in securing good health, such as in warming up sensibly for exercise to prevent injury. In The Prep, pupils learn to manage greater risks. They are aware of the potential dangers when accessing the internet. The curriculum provides frequent reminders about staying safe online. The pupils' participation in the number of residential trips offered by the curriculum means that they develop considerable resilience in overcoming personal challenge. Equally, they learn how to support one another in managing the material risks associated with open water activities and hill climbing. Pupils are increasingly aware of their mental health, since the curriculum has been developed to allow a more candid approach to dealing with anxiety. The pastoral leadership has also forged influential links with childhood mental health providers in the city.

- 3.17 Typically, pupils are extremely self-assured. Children in the EYFS grow in confidence because they are encouraged to pursue their interests at their own pace, such as in the woodland learning environment, where they gradually explore further afield. Pupils in the Pre-Prep learn to accept that success is built on making and correcting mistakes, without compromising their self-esteem. Pupils show great composure when performing in front of an audience, calmly preparing sheet music and costumes beforehand. The high standards achieved by Prep pupils depend on their considerable self-discipline, as many of them further their academic studies at home.
- 3.18 Children in the EYFS learn to be tolerant decision makers, as they realise voting involves foregoing some of the options. Pupils in the Pre-Prep recognise how subtle choices when interacting with others can help to preserve friendships. The personal, social and health education scheme reinforces the *Children's Charter* by encouraging pupils to be gentle with one another. The expansion of pupil leadership roles means that more Prep pupils understand the importance of choosing to use their leadership qualities wisely. Pupils with SEND take responsibility for deciding when they are ready to take the next step, as skilful provision in learning support avoids over-reliance on adult support.
- 3.19 As a result of the *Children's Charter*, which advises pupils to be honest and truthful, most pupils have a strong moral code. A vast majority of pupils agreed in the questionnaire that the school expects them to behave well, although a few parents did not agree. The inspectors found that the pupils behave extremely well, responding appropriately in different social situations, but always courteous and patient. Pupils in the Pre-Prep explained that it is helpful to have a guide in the *Children's Charter* that makes it clear 'how to be good.' Children in the EYFS adhere to the setting's rules because they know that these rules are for their safety, such as in taking responsibility themselves by wearing the band that denotes they are learning in the outdoor area. Prep pupils are suitably pragmatic, accepting the need for sanctions in establishing the boundaries for acceptable behaviour. They apply a mature understanding of the role of rules in creating a civilized society. For example, pupils demonstrated entirely rational views during a debate considering the impact of rules on living conditions and human rights during the Roman Empire.
- 3.20 The distinctive feature of the pupils' conduct is their capacity for thoughtfulness. They readily nominate one another for the *Children's Charter* awards, which celebrates the care that they show for others. These routines mean that they begin to think more deeply about the human spirit, which a skill promoted through the philosophy component within the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 were inspired to initiate a discussion about whether surviving an exploration was more heroic than dying in the quest, after hearing in assembly about Magellan's expedition. Pupils have a strong sense of the non-material aspects of life because teaching encourages them to consider abstract ideas. They described how they seek to connect their own art work, or a piece of music, with an emotional response. The recent preparations for the school's 140th anniversary have prompted many pupils to compare the rights and freedoms of Victorian children with their own. As a result, they keenly appreciate the opportunities available to them now.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Ms Juliet Jaggs	Reporting inspector
Mrs Caroline Petryszak	Compliance team inspector (Head of junior school, GDST school)
Dr Simon Horbury	Team inspector (Head of department, ISA school)
Mr Ian Raybould	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Grant Whitaker	Team inspector (Director of studies, IAPS school)
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Co-ordinating inspector for early years
Miss Jane Sheppard	Team inspector for EYFS (Head of lower school, IAPS school)