



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
COLCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL**

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## Colchester High School

Full Name of School	<b>Colchester High School</b>
DfE Number	<b>881/6015</b>
Address	<b>Colchester High School Wellesley Road Colchester Essex CO3 3HD</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01206 573389</b>
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Email Address	<b>info@colchesterhighschool.co.uk</b>
Principal	<b>Mr David Young</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Danuta Tomasz</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>493</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys and Girls (348 boys; 145 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>2-5 (EYFS): 43    5-11: 154 11-18: 296</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Karen Hull</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys and Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>8 March 2016 to 11 March 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 EYFS intermediate inspection was in February 2013 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in March 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.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, 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 Richard Mannix	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Valerie Clark	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mrs Lynda Corry	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mrs Naomi Fowke	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mrs Wendy Kempster	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mrs Jane Stevens	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Miss Mary Regan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Colchester High School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged between two and eighteen years. It was founded as a girls' school in 1882 and became co-educational in 1910. It then became a boys' school for the greater part of its history, readmitting girls into its Lower School in 1995, and into its Senior School in 2006. The school is non-denominational, admitting pupils of all faiths or none, and has been owned and run by the Cognita group of schools since 2005. In common with all such schools, it is governed from Cognita's head office in Milton Keynes. The school consists of the Lower School for pupils aged up to eleven years, including an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children up to five, and a Senior School for pupils aged between eleven and eighteen years. Since the previous inspection, co-educational sixth-form provision was opened in 2014, and governance from the Cognita group has improved its oversight and support of the schools in its group.
- 1.2 Through an emphasis on an individualised learning approach and focusing on the strengths of each pupil, the school seeks to allow pupils to realise their personal goals in a caring and friendly environment. The school aspires to encourage good manners, consideration for others and a sense of social responsibility, as a means of upholding its motto 'God first, others second, self last'.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 493 pupils on the roll. Of these, two-thirds were boys. In total, 296 pupils attended the Senior School, including 16 in the sixth form. There were 197 pupils in the Lower School, including 43 children in the EYFS setting, of whom 21 attended the Nursery part-time. The majority of pupils are of white British origin and come from Colchester and the surrounding towns and villages. Pupils have diverse backgrounds, but most are from business or professional families.
- 1.4 The average ability of the pupils in the Lower School is similar to the national average and their ability in the Senior School is slightly above the national average, with a wide spread of abilities. The school has three pupils with a statement of special educational needs, and has identified twenty-eight others as having some form of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom three receive special educational provision. Nineteen pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), four of whom receive specialist 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 Pupils are well educated and their achievement throughout the school is good. They show good levels of subject knowledge and understanding in relation to their ability, and exhibit excellent attitudes to their learning. Their success is supported fully by a broad and balanced curriculum, and the excellent extra-curricular provision, which enables a high level of achievement across a wide range of sporting and non-sporting enrichment activities. Pupils engage well with knowledgeable teachers and the very effective teaching observed makes a significant contribution to their academic and personal progress. The willingness of the staff to seek a full understanding of their pupils' abilities and adapt their approach to meet their needs is very much a strength of the teaching. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire a very large majority of the pupils felt that they are making good progress and praised the support and encouragement provided by the teaching staff.
- 2.2 Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, pupils show excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and these personal qualities and their well-being are strongly supported by excellent pastoral care and welfare systems. Safeguarding, health and safety arrangements and risk assessment procedures are highly effective and carefully managed. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with the staff, creating a happy and purposeful environment for them in which they thrive. Behaviour is generally of a high standard. Pupils are very supportive and caring in their relationships, and their approach to each other's individual differences is accepting and inclusive. The values of democracy, tolerance, respect for individual liberty and the rule of law are firmly embedded in the pupils' approach to school life and are actively promoted by the school. In their questionnaire responses a very large majority of parents considered their children to be happy, safe and well looked after.
- 2.3 The school is one of a number of schools owned by Cognita, and its governance is excellent. Its oversight of the school's development and management is very strong. Senior leaders and managers at all levels communicate well with governors and within the school, and provide the school with excellent levels of monitoring, planning and evaluating standards. Governance, through the senior leadership team (SLT), provides vision and challenge that ensure that the school's progress and development are effective and supported strongly. The school has responded fully to the recommendations of the previous inspection. The planning and teaching for each class now better reflect the ability range of the pupils. Assessment of their work and progress, including marking, is generally of a high standard. Reporting on pupils' progress to parents is clear and mostly very informative, however this approach is not consistent across the whole school. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of parents expressed some concerns about the reporting of pupils' progress. However, the large majority of parents were very supportive of the school in all aspects, including the education and care their children receive.

## **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 improvement.
1. Focus the excellent teaching currently seen within the school to enhance the long-term progress of pupils of all ages.
  2. Ensure that the best practice used in reports to parents, particularly in reporting pupils' progress, is reflected across the whole school.



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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the aims of the school, with their potential being recognised and personal achievements celebrated.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND or EAL, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. They enjoy their learning, achieve high standards, are creative and think critically. They learn effectively through play, exploration and active learning, and their physical skills are very well developed. Children demonstrate excellent concentration. They enjoy making decisions, and work well independently and in small groups or with a partner. Children in the Nursery recognise numerals from one to ten and enjoy using numbers in the school garden, where they count their steps and jumps. Children in Reception spoke knowledgeably about the position of the planets in the solar system and were able to discuss the movements of the earth orbiting the sun.
- 3.4 At all ages, pupils show good levels of subject knowledge and understanding in relation to their ability and apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Pupils speak confidently and articulately, expressing their opinions with conviction, and they listen carefully, respecting others' ideas. This was seen to good effect in a science lesson, where pupils collaborated in practical and group work with enthusiasm, and in the high level of analysis shown by pupils in discussing the meaning and impact of poetry. Pupils show good information and communication technology skills in support of their academic work. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum successfully encourages the pupils to be self-reflective and to lead healthy and safe lives.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages reason logically and have developed strong investigative skills, as seen in science lessons, and good presentation skills, as seen in their written work. Pupils show good skills in creative subjects such as art, music and drama, and develop good physical skills through a great variety of organised sports and outward-bound activities. Some achieve at the highest level in a wide variety of sports, with regional, national and international representation in activities including athletics, chess, swimming, sailing, hockey and water polo. Strong participation and success at bronze level have also been achieved in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, newly introduced, and in other extra-curricular competitions and awards. Pupils leaving the school at the age of 16 have achieved notable success in gaining entry to academically selective schools.
- 3.6 In the Lower School, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available from standardised tests, lesson observations, scrutiny of samples of work and interviews with pupils, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils of all abilities make progress over time that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Evidence from lessons observed, curricular interviews and work scrutiny indicated that pupils' current progress is good and sometimes excellent in relation to their abilities.
- 3.7 The following analysis uses national data for the years 2013 to 2015. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistical data is currently available.

Results in GCSE examinations have been above the national average for maintained schools. This level of attainment at GCSE and standardised measures of progress available indicate that pupils make appropriate progress to GCSE. Evidence during the inspection from lessons observed, pupil discussions and work scrutiny indicates that current achievement and progress of Senior School pupils are good and sometimes excellent. Recent improvements in teaching are having a marked impact on pupils' day-to-day achievement and learning, as observed in lessons. Pupils in the relatively new sixth form are scheduled to take the first A levels in June 2016. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the sixth form make progress that is good in relation to pupils of similar abilities.

- 3.8 Pupils with SEND achieve at a high level in relation to their abilities and more able pupils and those with EAL achieve well in relation to their abilities. Over time, pupils with SEND make excellent progress. Those with EAL make good progress both in acquiring English language and in their subject skills, knowledge and understanding. Able, gifted and talented pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities.
- 3.9 Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning are a significant factor in their good achievement. Throughout the school, pupils are eager to learn, show good powers of concentration and work well collaboratively and individually. They take responsibility for their own learning and respond with enthusiasm and high levels of engagement to set tasks.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 In the EYFS, a wide variety of stimulating educational programmes helps the children to reach and usually exceed their expected levels in development. Full account is taken of the needs of the children, which are met well, and the children gain great enjoyment from the learning experiences they receive. The focus on the early acquisition of reading skills for the younger children is very effective, and the older children benefit from specialist teaching in a variety of subjects, including languages music and physical education.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, the curriculum fulfils the school's aims to provide varied, challenging and inspiring learning opportunities. The curriculum is effective in covering all the appropriate areas of learning, in line with National Curriculum principles, and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' achievements. The curriculum is broad and balanced, both in the subject range and content within each subject area. Opportunities to develop pupils' creativity are appropriate, although they lack breadth across the curriculum. Information and communication technology provision affords good support for the curriculum. More able pupils have good opportunities to study additional GCSE subjects, partly outside the timetable, including religious studies. The PSHEE curriculum is very effectively established throughout the school, and enables pupils of all ages to become aware of contemporary issues that affect them and society. The sixth form, now in its second year, offers a good choice of academic subjects to its pupils, including additional subjects on request. These pupils benefit from a supportive enrichment programme, including public speaking and a Young Enterprise scheme, and are well supported in preparing for tertiary education. A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-questionnaire considered that the school offers a good range of subjects.

- 3.13 The broad and balanced curriculum is adapted well for pupils with SEND at all ages, including the few pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Following identification of pupils with SEND, thorough individual education plans set out teaching and learning strategies and appropriate targets support pupils' progress fully. Most SEND support is given in lunch and break times, and through occasional withdrawal from lessons. Excellent attention is given to preparing pupils with SEND for the next stage of their education and achieving greater independence. Pupils with EAL have full access to the curriculum and some additional support is given to those requiring it.
- 3.14 The provision for curricular enrichment is excellent. The variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs offered on a daily basis is well supported by the pupils throughout the school. They participate fully in a very wide range of sporting activities which are further enhanced by a broad choice of non-sporting activities, including music and drama, Irish dance and knitting clubs in the Lower School and African drumming and speaking clubs in the Senior School. Extra-curricular opportunities offer the more able pupils the chance to develop and excel in sport and in external examinations and competitions, through the English Speaking Board (ESB), for both Lower and Senior pupils, and the UK Maths Challenge and master classes in science. A very large majority of parents and pupils responding to the questionnaires felt that the school offers a good range of activities.
- 3.15 The support and enrichment of the curriculum through links with the community are excellent. Pupils of all age groups benefit from extensive trips and visits both locally and further afield. The curriculum is further extended by a wide range of visiting speakers. The school takes care to ensure that pupils are presented with a balance of opposing views on contemporary life. Opportunities to promote values such as democracy and tolerance are actively taken and are very effectively embedded in the curriculum, and the school takes its responsibility to reduce the risks from extremism very seriously.
- 3.16 Since the previous inspection the school has enhanced the curricular and extra-curricular provision by extending the linguistic and computer science provision, and introducing ESB examinations and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

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

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, teachers are enthusiastic and effectively engage and motivate children through well-planned activities. Teachers know children extremely well and have high expectations of them. Assessment on entry and appropriate ongoing teacher assessments are thorough, and are used systematically to track children's progress. This information, and the good quality resources available, are used very effectively by highly skilled teachers to promote children's learning and development.
- 3.19 Teaching throughout the school supports the school's aims to help pupils to become confident, ambitious and independent learners. The teaching engages pupils well and is successful in promoting their progress, enabling them to develop a secure understanding of individual subjects. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect, and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, teaching is well planned and demonstrates great understanding of the needs of pupils across the full ability range. Work in lessons is very effectively planned to match this range of abilities. Since the previous

inspection, efforts to ensure greater consistency in the quality of marking and assessment have been effective. Comments are constructive and complement peer- and self-assessment across the school, to ensure that feedback is swift, appropriate and meaningful. Regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress, and which provide effective target setting, are firmly embedded in the assessment process to ensure that the pupils are aware of ways to improve and make progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has been successful in developing and improving the overall quality of teaching. This has been very effectively strengthened through recent new teaching and learning initiatives, including sharing good practice, enhanced monitoring and improved training. The overwhelming majority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that they are making good progress, with a very large majority feeling that their teachers help them to learn and work independently.

- 3.21 At all stages, teachers demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge. A good variety of resources is used well to support pupils' learning. The excellent relationship between teachers and pupils ensures that teachers know their pupils well and creates a very effective learning environment, enabling good progress for all, including pupils with SEND. A great variety of teaching methods and strategies challenges pupils to think for themselves in an atmosphere of mutual trust. In a Year 3 lesson, excellent co-operative learning was encouraged through pupils being encouraged to explore their emotions through dance.
- 3.22 Teaching, with very good pace, questioning and targeted discussions, fosters effective pupil engagement. This enables the pupils to demonstrate good reflective learning, often at a high level in relation to their abilities. Pupils with SEND are very effectively supported and challenged, and those with EAL have their specific needs met well. Teaching offers more able pupils high levels of challenge and good opportunities to develop and make progress. The personalised approach shown in teaching supports fully the individual needs of the pupils, particularly in the Senior School, where lessons include frequently adapted questions and tasks for different abilities. Teaching makes the appropriate provision for pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- 3.23 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of parents considered that their children are not given age-appropriate homework, and a small minority of pupils considered that homework does not help them to learn. Inspection evidence does not support these views. From the teaching observed, the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, the homework set was found to be appropriate and helpful to the pupils' learning and progress.

## **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 In the EYFS, the children demonstrate excellent self-confidence as they arrive in the morning, they settle quickly and they enthusiastically prepare for the day ahead. The children have highly developed social skills, as observed during Nursery snack time when they politely shared their food and when they took turns during play. The children have a keen sense of right and wrong. They thoroughly enjoy the cultural diversity of the school community and respond well to the promotion of values such as fair play and respect for others. Children are extremely happy in the EYFS and are supported fully in their transition within the setting and beyond.
- 4.3 Throughout the school, the excellent personal development of pupils represents a successful fulfilment of the school's aim to show consideration for others and a sense of social responsibility. Pupils respond positively to the school's active promotion of values such as democracy, tolerance and respect for others, and these are clearly evident in the culture of the school and the pupils' attitudes. Pupils have a well-developed sense of an individual's right to be different, and their behaviour towards each other's individual differences is tolerant and inclusive. Pupils understand the concept of democracy, they are aware of British institutions and they respect the civil and criminal law of England. Pupils demonstrate a high standard of personal development by the time they leave school.
- 4.4 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school has pupils of many different faiths and their core values, including integrity, are shared by all. Stimulating PSHEE and religious studies programmes, alongside thoughtful assemblies and opportunities for personal reflection, are enjoyed by the pupils and significantly contribute to their personal development. Pupils of all ages participate with sincerity in acts of worship, are reflective in lessons and show self-confidence and self-esteem when dealing with others. For example, during a Year 6 religious studies lesson pupils had an excellent discussion on why freedom of belief underpins British society.
- 4.5 Pupils develop excellent moral awareness. They have a keen sense of right and wrong, and develop knowledgeable, balanced opinions on moral issues. For example, during a form period pupils enthusiastically discussed whether mutual respect was a more significant value than democracy. The peer mentor support system in the Senior School is particularly effective and welcomed by pupils. Many classes devise their own class rules and monitor each other's behaviour according to these rules. Pupils are keen to do their best for their class and for their sporting or house teams, and take pride in their own and others' achievements.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils have a very real sense of belonging to a community and are most welcoming and courteous to visitors. They take their responsibilities seriously, whether through individual roles such as head boy or head girl, or through membership of bodies such as the charity committee or school council, as language leaders or as prefects. This evidence does not support the views of a small minority of Senior School pupils in questionnaire responses, which indicated insufficient opportunities to take responsibility. Pupils show a good understanding of current affairs, which is enhanced by guest speakers. Pupils care greatly about the needs of others and support a wide range of local, national and

international charities, often organising fund-raising activities themselves involving the whole school community, including staff.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Their understanding of faiths and cultures different from their own is helped by the school's multi-cultural community and through the study of a variety of faiths in religious studies. Pupils from different cultures feel well integrated and supported throughout school. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities to experience other cultures, for example through activities such as the African drumming club, themed food days from around the world, and participation in cultural visit days and events. Pupils understand the difficulties associated with discrimination.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, each child's individual needs are very effectively supported by a designated key person. Children form very positive relationships with their teachers and trust adults who care for them, enabling them to feel safe and secure in the setting. The children understand, and happily follow, the playground code of conduct and have a clear understanding of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, the quality of pastoral care provided by the staff supports fully the school's aim to provide a safe, happy and supportive environment. A well-structured and effective pastoral system provides support for all pupils, and the close liaison between academic and pastoral teams enables robust monitoring of pupils' progress and development to take place. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and the pupils are very appreciative of the time staff spend supporting them.
- 4.11 Excellent guidance regarding healthy living is provided through the PSHEE programme, informative displays, teaching and general discussions. School meals, provided up to Year 8, are popular, with nutritious and healthy choices available. Pupils above Year 8 provide their own meals, or they can purchase prepared nutritious food from a school shop. Pupils enjoy regular exercise through an extensive games and activities programme.
- 4.12 The school is successful in promoting good behaviour in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Pupils, both in and out of lessons, were seen to be routinely helpful and courteous to one another. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour. Evidence gained during the inspection from lessons, general observations and pupil interviews did not support this view. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils considered that their teachers are not fair in the way that they give rewards and sanctions. Evidence from interviews with pupils and scrutiny of records indicated that rewards and sanctions are appropriately and proportionally applied.
- 4.13 Pupils indicated during discussions that bullying is rare and they are confident about what to do and who to contact should they be concerned for themselves or a friend. Pupils were clear that any instances would be dealt with quickly and effectively. A small minority of parents and pupils in pre-inspection questionnaire responses expressed concern about the school's handling of bullying. Inspection evidence, including the scrutiny of records and discussions with pastoral staff, indicated that the school is fully aware of occasional incidents. Each incident was looked into

thoroughly and dealt with appropriately, and any sanctions imposed were recorded carefully and monitored effectively.

- 4.14 The school takes many opportunities to seek and respond to the views of pupils. Pupil representatives on the school and charity councils throughout the school are proactive in listening and responding to the views of others, and there are additional ways for pupils to voice concerns, including 'worry boxes'. Pupils throughout the school gave many examples of proposals from the school council that have been implemented, including the provision of lockers and a refurbished playground. This evidence does not support the views of a minority of pupils who considered that the school does not ask or respond to their opinion.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable three-year plan to widen educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 In the EYFS, children's welfare is effectively promoted and the safeguarding of children is ensured well. The regular attendance of children and their prompt arrival are closely monitored and all records are appropriately kept and retained. Arrangements for the supervision of all pupils whilst on site are rigorous, and movement of pupils around the school is carefully controlled.
- 4.18 Throughout the school there are highly effective arrangements to safeguard all pupils, including those in the EYFS. An effective policy is well implemented and has full regard to official guidance. Appropriate training in child protection has been undertaken by all staff and other adults in the school. Staff are aware of risks to pupils through radicalisation and extremism. Safeguarding procedures are understood fully by members of staff. Seven members of staff are trained in child protection at a higher level. Pupils' awareness of e-safety is promoted strongly, and they are well supported in this regard through assemblies, parents' meetings, and PSHEE and information and communication technology teaching.
- 4.19 The school takes all necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, and all staff have appropriate training in this area. Regular fire practices are held, and the timings of evacuation are noted and comments on speed and efficiency carefully recorded.
- 4.20 Throughout the school, regulatory requirements and welfare arrangements that promote pupils' well-being are rigorously implemented. Health and safety policies and procedures are efficient, well monitored and reviewed annually. Comprehensive risk assessments for buildings and grounds are reviewed annually, including those promoting the welfare, health and safety for pupils on school trips. Pupils who are ill or injured are very well cared for on site and facilities are appropriate, including provision for pupils with SEND. Throughout the school, a high proportion of staff receive appropriate training in first aid, and in the EYFS eight staff are trained in paediatric first aid.
- 4.21 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Excellent oversight of the school is provided by governance from the Cognita proprietorial body. Governance is successful in enabling the school to realise its aims and vision to provide a happy and supportive environment in which every individual feels valued and respected. Governors have a wide range of relevant expertise and skills available, which are used very effectively to provide challenge and stimulus for the school's development, including input to its strategic improvement plan. They ensure that the school has the necessary financial, human and other resources. The proprietorial body provides good oversight of the EYFS and this ensures very effective support for the setting.
- 5.3 The effective governance provides the proprietorial body with an excellent insight into the working of the school, through reports from the SLT, and through regular visits to the school by proprietorial representatives. Academic standards, including examination performance, are carefully reviewed by governors, as are the pupils' standards of personal development.
- 5.4 Efficient arrangements and procedures enable the proprietorial body to gain a comprehensive oversight of its statutory responsibilities, through regular meetings with designated staff and thorough checks on appropriate records. Policies and procedures for child protection and welfare, health and safety are diligently maintained and reviewed annually by the proprietorial body. Cognita provides a suitable training programme for new governors, which includes training in safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- 5.5 Since the previous inspection the school has successfully developed more effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its work, including the sharing of good practice within the school, and the teaching is now planned more effectively to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 Leadership and management at all levels throughout the school are highly successful in ensuring the fulfilment of the school's aims to develop the whole individual through the high quality learning experiences pupils receive. The school, including the EYFS setting, actively promotes values such as equality, diversity and respect for others.
- 5.8 In the EYFS, the environment is very welcoming and stimulating, and the leadership and management ensure that this is maintained, in part, through risk assessments that are routine, comprehensive and thorough. The management structure is excellent, with a clear developmental vision founded upon an ethos of self-evaluation. Regular meetings are held to monitor educational programmes. Staff appraisal programmes are effective and provide excellent opportunities for



continuous professional development. The recommendation of the previous inspection to consolidate the practice of staff supervision in the setting has been successfully implemented. Progress made across the EYFS since the previous inspection has been excellent.

- 5.9 Throughout the school, the SLT is highly effective in discharging its delegated responsibilities for the safeguarding of pupils in a secure and welcoming environment. Clear and comprehensive policies make a good contribution to the safeguarding of pupils, which is a priority within the ethos of the school. Safeguarding and related policies are appropriately reviewed at management meetings and further discussed with staff. Support staff ensure that welfare, health and safety procedures in place are very efficiently managed.
- 5.10 Management at all levels, including in the EYFS, is successful in securing high quality staff. A comprehensive recruitment policy has been adopted and the requisite recruitment checks to ensure the suitability of all staff, including governors and volunteers, are carried out thoroughly and appropriately recorded. Strategies for the induction of new staff are very effective, including familiarisation with comprehensive policies and training in procedures for all aspects of welfare, health and safety and safeguarding. All staff receive appropriate in-service training.
- 5.11 Leadership and management are highly successful in providing a clear vision and educational direction, and leaders are committed fully to improving areas identified for development. Planning is vigorous and thorough, with departmental objectives feeding into the whole-school development plan. This process involves governors and staff from all sections of the school, fostering a positive and effective sense of involvement and achieving shared goals. Recent in-depth monitoring and evaluation by the SLT identified a need to improve teaching and learning. This ongoing monitoring, with a focus on the school's performance management process, effectively identifies future training requirements for staff. The analysis of progress and attainment data is undertaken thoroughly and contributes effectively to the monitoring of teaching and learning. Through additional training and the setting of appropriate targets, staff have become more effective in encouraging the pupils to demonstrate greater intellectual ambition and to raise their academic standards. The SLT is successful in evaluating its effectiveness. Recommendations from the previous inspection to improve the monitoring of educational practice and meet the learning needs of all pupils have been responded to appropriately.
- 5.12 The SLT has created a new, clear middle management structure, with well-defined roles and a regular pattern of meetings. The introduction of phase leaders into each key educational stage has enabled closer contact between the sections of the school. Middle managers now meet regularly and more whole-school departmental meetings take place. This has improved the consistency of communication across the school and the educational provision for pupils. Middle managers regularly undertake lesson observations, and the emphasis placed on teaching and learning is having a beneficial effect on pupils' outcomes, as seen in the effective and engaging teaching. Departmental work scrutiny, walks around the school focused on aspects of learning, and optional focused lesson observations have all contributed to better monitoring of teaching and learning, and greater awareness of pupils' progress.
- 5.13 The school is very successful in engaging parents in its life. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the educational provision, especially for the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities, and the information provided by the school, and they

felt that their children are safe and well looked after. Inspection evidence supports these views. A small minority of parents expressed the view that the school is not well led and managed. Inspectors scrutinised records and interviewed staff. Given the recent improvements in effectiveness of leadership and management, inspection evidence does not support this view.

- 5.14 Regular newsletters, year books, departmental handbooks and the useful school website all provide access to a wealth of key information for all parents. The introduction of the electronic transfer of information and the use of social media have significantly improved communication and been greatly appreciated by parents. Online interactive learning diaries in the EYFS enable parents to communicate with teachers and engage fully in their children's learning and progress. This provides an opportunity for them to contribute examples of their children's learning and development observed at home. The school provides and makes available all the required items of information.
- 5.15 In response to the questionnaire, a very large majority of the parents from all sections of the school indicated that they are encouraged to become involved in events and other aspects of school life. A wide range of significant workshops and meetings is organised for parents and pupils. A parent engagement group provides them with the opportunity to meet members of the SLT, contribute their ideas and express their opinions on subjects such as e-safety and uniform, which gives the parents an effective voice on school matters. Opportunities for parents to be involved in the life and work of the school include invitations to attend special events, class assemblies, concerts and a prize day, accompanying school trips and supporting sports days and match fixtures.
- 5.16 Throughout the school, parents have regular contact with teachers to discuss their children's attainment and progress. Parents receive regular, informative written reports commenting on their children's progress. A small minority of parents in their questionnaire responses were not satisfied with the information given in written reports about their children's progress. Inspection evidence confirms that in some reports there is a lack of clarity with regard to pupils' progress and ways for them to improve.
- 5.17 In questionnaire responses, a small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction about the way the school has handled their concerns. Inspectors scrutinised records, questioned parents and discussed systems with staff. They found that the school is diligent and demonstrates care in its handling of concerns and recording complaints, in accordance with its published procedures.

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