



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
SINCLAIR HOUSE SCHOOL**

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Full Name of School	Sinclair House School
DfE Number	205/6385
EYFS Number	EY432886
Address	Sinclair House School 59 Fulham High Street London SW6 3JJ
Telephone Number	020 7736 9182
Email Address	info@sinclairhouseschool.co.uk
Principal/Proprietor	Mrs Carlotta O'Sullivan
Age Range	2 to 10
Total Number of Pupils	126
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (73 boys; 53 girls)
Numbers by Age	2-3 (EYFS): 31 5-10: 36 3-5 (EYFS): 59
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Francesca Monti
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	06 May 2014 to 09 May 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The school has not yet received an ISI inspection. The previous inspection was carried out by Ofsted in 2011.

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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, 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

Mrs Jan Preece

Reporting Inspector

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Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sinclair House School is a proprietorial day school and Montessori nursery for boys and girls from the ages of two to ten. It was established in 1989 and has a Roman Catholic affiliation, though welcomes pupils of all faiths. The school has been owned by the current principal since 2005.
- 1.2 In recent years, the school has acquired and refurbished an additional site in Fulham High Street to extend its provision for pupils up to the age of 13. Pupils from Reception upwards moved to this site in September 2013. The school has recently acquired additional land to the rear of this building for the purpose of a new playground, sporting facilities, and the expansion of facilities for design technology (DT) and science. These are due for completion in September 2014. The Nursery classes are accommodated in two houses, one for children aged two to three years and the other for those aged three to four years. These are situated on opposite sides of Munster Road in Fulham, about 15 minutes' walk from the main school.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 126 pupils on roll. Of these, 90 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom 74 were attending part-time. Currently the pupil population extends to Year 5 and there are an almost equal number of boys and girls. Of the five pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), one has a statement of special educational needs and two receive specialist learning support in school. Twenty-three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), though none of these requires extra support. Pupils come from the diverse cultural backgrounds that are represented in the locality. The ability profile of the school is wide, and is above the national average overall.
- 1.4 The school's vision is to inspire a passion for learning and to support each child in order to encourage all pupils to reach their full potential. It aims to achieve these through the provision of a high quality, comprehensive and meaningful education for all pupils, celebration of their individual talents and encouragement to succeed within the bounds of their own unique abilities. The school seeks to ensure that each child leaves not only equipped with strong educational tools, but feeling valued and confident to tackle the next steps on their scholastic path as life-long learners.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Reception and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the Nursery and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Nursery

School	NC name
Lower Nursery	Nursery (ages 2 to 3)
Upper Nursery	Nursery (ages 3 to 4)

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Throughout the school pupils' achievement is good, so that they are well educated in accordance with the school's aims. Pupils, including children in the EYFS, display particularly good knowledge, understanding and skills in literacy and mathematics. Teaching is of a good standard overall. Where it is less successful, the planning of learning tasks takes insufficient account of pupils' abilities, resulting in slower progress. Pupils' educational standards are supported by their excellent attitudes towards their learning, demonstrated by self-discipline, attentiveness and application. These promote the good progress that they generally make in lessons and over time. Opportunities for children in the Nursery to use information and communication technology (ICT) and creative resources throughout the EYFS are currently limited. Pupils' learning is supported by the wide range of subjects provided, which is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs, visits and visitors to the school.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school, and their social and cultural awareness is particularly strong. It is supported by excellent pastoral care, where teachers pay great attention to individual pupils' needs. This is established in the EYFS through the Montessori approach and, for older pupils, promoted by example setting by staff and the encouragement to be tolerant and mindful of others' needs. Behaviour in the school is exemplary and relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in interviews, pupils were very satisfied with their school experience. Many health and safety measures such as the testing and servicing of appliances and installations and first-aid protocols are implemented well, however, arrangements for welfare, health and safety are unsatisfactory due to shortcomings in compliance across the school with some regulatory requirements for safeguarding and staff recruitment. The school acted swiftly to rectify many of these, where it was possible to do so, during the inspection.
- 2.3 Governance is provided by the proprietor, who also fulfils the role of school principal. Most aspects of governance, such as strategic planning and support for the school's life and work, are very well exercised. However, oversight of statutory responsibilities has been insufficiently rigorous. The school is undergoing a period of change as it extends its age range and establishes an additional site for the older pupils. Leadership has a comprehensive development plan that is constantly reviewed and built upon. Management structures, including the creation of a senior leadership team and the roles of subject and department co-ordinators, are not fully developed but already make a useful contribution to monitoring and improving standards and to establishing effective liaison between the sections of the school. Links with the parents are excellent and they are very happy with all aspects of the school's provision for their children.
- 2.4 Since the previous EYFS inspection, carried out by Ofsted, one of the Nursery buildings has been rewired, and in moving to its new site the school has ensured that teaching spaces are of an appropriate size. The school has also addressed recommendations to improve access to outside space for children in the Reception class and to refine assessment procedures in the EYFS.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.5 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that a separate check against the barred list is undertaken if work commences before the school has seen a new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate or accepted a certificate from previous employment, and is recorded in the single central register [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a) and 22.(3)(b), under Suitability of staff and proprietors];
 - ensure that all staff, including peripatetic teachers or coaches, undertake suitable safeguarding training at the required regular intervals [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety];
 - ensure that risk assessments are specific to the space or activity, identify how risks will be minimised and are reviewed regularly [Part 3, paragraph 11, under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.6 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that information from assessments is used consistently to plan tasks that match individual pupils' needs and capabilities.
 2. Implement a robust system to ensure that regulatory requirements are monitored and policies and procedures reviewed and amended as necessary.
 3. Extend opportunities for children in the Nursery to experience ICT.
 4. Provide a wider range of creative resources within the indoor and outdoor environment across the EYFS, which children can freely explore and investigate.

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 school's aim to encourage them to succeed within the bounds of their own unique abilities. They are particularly well grounded in their knowledge, understanding and skills in literacy and numeracy. Many pupils demonstrate excellent speaking and reasoning skills that enable them to offer coherent explanations to the class or to contribute productively in discussion when working with partners. Pupils listen attentively in lessons and offer thoughtful responses to teachers' questions. Reading skills vary according to pupils' ages and abilities, though many read confidently and with enjoyment. Imaginative writing is of a high standard, demonstrating pupils' good use of descriptive vocabulary. Pupils of all ages show strong numerical abilities, which are applied well when they are given problem-solving and investigative tasks in mathematics. They use ICT competently to make posters, leaflets and presentations linked to their class topics.
- 3.3 Older pupils' understanding and grasp of key skills and vocabulary are addressed effectively through specialist teaching. For example, they are developing an accurate understanding and use of scientific vocabulary and investigative skills, such as when exploring magnetism. Pupils' creativity is well expressed in attractive artwork displayed around the school. They develop their physical co-ordination and skills through introduction to a number of team sports, as well as gymnastics, judo, and for some, optional ballet. Pupils develop good choral skills and musical capability through their singing in choir as well as in music lessons. They enjoy exposition, such as when making a presentation on their topics to their parents or demonstrating their work in assembly. Pupils in the singing club perform in assemblies and those in the gym club showcase their skills to parents. Every pupil takes part in musical plays at Christmas and in the summer.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance in national tests, but on the evidence available from lesson observations, work scrutiny and interviews with pupils, is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, combined with their success in extra-curricular activities and the development of their thinking skills, indicates that pupils make good progress relative to those of similar ability. Pupils with SEND or EAL and any with a statement of special educational needs are well supported by specialist interventions, as well as through learning in small classes. Increasingly systematic monitoring of the progress of pupils with SEND and evidence from their work and teachers' records, indicates that over time, those with SEND make good progress with their specific learning targets and those with EAL develop sufficient confidence and fluency to participate fully in class.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. In lessons they demonstrate an exemplary self-disciplined and motivated approach, which enables them to be very receptive to teaching and promotes a conducive learning atmosphere. They concentrate well in individual tasks and support each other's learning through effective co-operation when working in pairs or small groups. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents indicated that they are very pleased with the levels of progress being made by their children.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.7 The curriculum is continuously developed as the school expands its age range, and the resulting programme is broad and balanced. The school has widened the range of opportunities it offers, so that its aim to provide an intellectually stimulating, rounded and balanced curriculum throughout to support each child's academic progress is promoted well. The curriculum encompasses all the requisite areas of learning. Pupils are offered the usual subjects of the National Curriculum, together with drama, reasoning, swimming and French, so that, as they progress through the school, they develop a firm foundation for their next stage of education. Pupils study a comprehensive personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme covering issues such as friendship, fairness and sharing, and they confirmed that lessons help them to think about each other's feelings and to understand other people's points of view.
- 3.8 Some aspects of the curriculum are presented using cross-curricular themes, such as a project on India in which pupils did their own research and presented their findings using ICT. Specialist teaching in French, drama, art, DT, physical education (PE), martial arts, dance and ICT has recently been expanded to include science, music and religious education (RE) for older pupils. Project work regularly uses ICT. Provision for PE is good and includes jujitsu as a timetabled subject from Reception.
- 3.9 Curriculum planning is comprehensive and the new curriculum co-ordinators ensure that it provides continuity as the age range extends. As part of its re-organisation, the school has improved its provision for pupils with SEND. Individual lessons are provided for both SEND and EAL as needs are identified, and generous provision of teaching assistants provides further support in the small classes. The school has not yet established specific provision for pupils who are particularly able or talented and additional challenge in class is not consistently provided.
- 3.10 The school offers an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities to enhance the curriculum. Clubs offered include musical activities, physical pursuits, drama, art, ballet, chess, Mandarin and Italian. Drama workshops take place and there are regular visits by local authors. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by the comprehensive range of educational visits for all age groups, which take advantage of the school's location to include many London museums.
- 3.11 Links with the community are encouraged through the school's participation in charitable events, such as raising money for a soup kitchen organised by a local church and for a wide variety of national charities. Pupils also visit local places of worship, the swimming pool and the park for games. Opportunities for sporting activities with other schools are being developed.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.13 Pupils benefit from the effective teaching, in accordance with the school's aims. It combines the expertise of subject specialists and the in-depth knowledge of individual learning profiles provided by class teachers. Core skills in reading, spelling, grammar and mathematics are taught very thoroughly and contribute strongly to pupils' all-round progress. Lessons are generally well planned, with learning objectives made clear to the pupils. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used effectively to engage pupils' interest and promote their enjoyment. For instance, in mathematics, pupils managed their own learning by constructing calculations when rolling a dice. Pupils have the opportunity to use the attractive, suitably-stocked library at lunchtimes to borrow books to read at home. Relationships in class are excellent; teachers have high expectations for behaviour and learning, and pupils respond positively. Teachers give clear explanations, and their enthusiasm and judicious use of praise foster application and perseverance and create a warm, supportive atmosphere.
- 3.14 Much teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and an understanding of different learning styles. Consequently, a variety of strategies is employed and engages the pupils' attention well. In such teaching, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and make full use of time so that pupils make rapid progress. Most teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' learning needs and are clear about how to promote further progress. In the best lessons observed, they continually assessed understanding through astute questioning, so that pupils' thinking was challenged at a deeper level and they were helped to develop their ideas. As a consequence of improved and developing arrangements for pupils with SEND or EAL, they are provided with sensitive support in many lessons, often from well-deployed teaching assistants or the learning support co-ordinator, and their individual learning plans set appropriate targets. Bright and interesting displays in the classrooms enhance the learning environment, celebrate pupils' achievements and support their learning.
- 3.15 In the few less-effective lessons observed and in some work seen in pupils' books, the teaching failed to use knowledge about pupils' previous learning to match tasks sufficiently to the ages and varying abilities of the class. All pupils undertook the same activities, and pupils with SEND or EAL were unable to accomplish tasks independently. The more able were not given a more challenging task until they had completed that set for all, which they already understood. This resulted in slower progress for pupils with such learning needs.
- 3.16 Following an evaluation of the assessment methods in use, the school has recently adopted a common system of assessing pupils' performance using national attainment levels. Staff are enthusiastic about its value in helping them to monitor pupils' progress and to plan effective activities tailored to individual learning needs. Since implementation is still at an early stage of development, its use to set targets and review progress over time is not yet fully established. Whilst teachers know their pupils well, the school does not have a system to ascertain pupils' baseline ability and therefore to ensure that progress through national levels and expectations is appropriate to individual capabilities.
- 3.17 Most work is helpfully marked and, at its best, offers suggestions for future improvement, as well as praise, though the marking policy is applied inconsistently. Having identified this as an area for development, the school has trialled a new

marking system in one year group, which encourages pupils to reflect on their work. Teachers in other year groups are now keen to adopt this approach and intend to implement it fully in the next academic year.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.
- 4.2 Throughout the school pupils exhibit well-developed personal skills and good spiritual development. They show an appreciation of non-material aspects of life such as the values of friendship and environmental conservation. Pupils are emotionally mature for their age and demonstrate independence and self-confidence in all aspects of school life, in accordance with its aim to create a happy and stimulating environment where children are encouraged to develop their self-confidence, identity and independence. Christian festivals are celebrated. Weekly assemblies provide the opportunity to celebrate pupils' achievements, helping them to develop a sense of self-worth.
- 4.3 Pupils' sense of morality is well developed and supported by the PSHCE programme for older children, in which they discuss topics on moral themes and the consequences of choices they make. They understand the difference between right and wrong, and show respect for the school and each other. Pupils contribute ideas for the formation of class rules, which they take seriously. They are kind and co-operative with each other and with teachers, showing good manners and excellent behaviour. They acknowledge importance in including everyone and show a tolerant, open and supportive attitude towards new members of their school.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. The recently introduced house system gives pupils of all ages the opportunity to integrate. Older pupils relish the opportunity to help their younger peers, for example on special house days. Opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility are presently limited due to the school's size, but they enjoy acting as class monitors by distributing books and lunches, and represent the class by collecting awards in assemblies. Through judo, pupils learn leadership skills, teamwork, self-control and discipline. Pupils are involved in a wide range of charity fund-raising events, which help them to understand the lives of others in the wider world and increase their social awareness. Younger pupils have developed political awareness through their study of Roman culture, during which they conducted a mock vote in the imaginary senate. Older pupils listen to a children's news programme and discuss topics such as voting in South Africa. They develop economic awareness through activities in class, such as running their own grocery shop and the opportunity to buy books on World Book Day.
- 4.5 Pupils have an excellent cultural awareness, developed naturally within their multi-cultural school community. They develop their understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures through their study of major world religions in RE, enhanced by visits to local places of worship and by special cultural events. The school holds an annual International Day at which the pupils dress up in international costumes and learn about life in different parts of the world, through which they develop an appreciation of the achievements and customs of different cultures. Older pupils spoke warmly of the opportunity to share information about their native countries with their classmates. This further enables them to understand and develop good relations with others from different backgrounds and cultures within the school.
- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, pupils have developed the personal skills of self-esteem and social confidence to equip them for the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Staff incorporate the Montessori philosophy that each child is an individual who is a natural learner and should be given the freedom to work at the pace that is right for him or her, to provide very effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims. The school adopts an inclusive and welcoming approach. The learning support department is proactive in identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils and arranges, in partnership with parents, for external professionals to provide additional one-to-one support, including working with families whose first language is not English. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are very positive and supportive. Exemplary behaviour is fostered well within each class, for example through staff and pupils working together to devise suitable rules. Robust procedures, which are well implemented by staff, promote good behaviour and guard against bullying. Pupils report that whilst they have occasional disagreements, they have experienced no bullying and they are confident that they may approach any teacher should they have a concern.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to understand and adopt a healthy lifestyle through learning about nutritious food, including the requirement to bring only fresh fruit and vegetables for snacks, as well as good opportunities to take regular exercise. The school has a qualified nutritionist who works closely with a local contractor that supplies pupils' lunches.
- 4.11 At this early stage in provision for older year groups there is not yet a formal opportunity for pupils to express their views. Nevertheless, pupils are able to convey their ideas informally due to their close engagement with staff. They give feedback on school lunches and suggest areas they would like to research for class projects. Prior to the move to the new site, pupils were asked for ideas on facilities they would appreciate.
- 4.12 The vast majority of parents who completed the inspection questionnaire felt that their children are well looked after, are happy and feel safe. These views were supported in discussions with parents.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory.
- 4.14 Both the designated senior people for safeguarding have received appropriate inter-agency training from the local authority. Full-time staff have also received training though the school has not ensured that visiting staff, or those appointed during the school year, have been trained, and there are no records of individuals' attendance. The safeguarding policy now meets requirements and has been circulated to all staff. Whilst most recruitment procedures follow statutory guidance and all staff have been checked by the DBS, a separate barred list check has not always been carried out when its receipt has been delayed.
- 4.15 Fire risk assessments on all sites have been carried out by a qualified external consultant and recommendations implemented in a timely manner. A suitable policy to reduce the risk from fire is now in place and staff have received basic training in

fire awareness and safety. The school has made arrangements for staff members designated to take the lead in preventing or addressing a fire incident to update their training. Fire drills take place at suitable intervals and are now recorded correctly.

- 4.16 An external specialist recently carried out a health and safety audit and the school has improved its health and safety documentation as a result. It has begun to address other recommendations, particularly those requiring immediate attention. Electrical and gas equipment and installations are regularly tested and serviced, and other necessary maintenance checks are carried out. Risk assessments for external trips are thorough, but those for the main school building and on-site activities are insufficiently specific in identifying possible hazards. Many do not indicate how risks will be minimised, nor that they are reviewed regularly.
- 4.17 There are sufficient staff trained in first aid but currently no paediatric first aider on the main school site for children in Reception. Provision for pupils who are ill or injured is suitable and records of accidents and treatment given are appropriately maintained. Medication is administered with due regard to suitable protocols for administration, recording and storage. The school now has a robust system to ensure that parents are notified every time their children receive treatment.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately and stored for the required three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The principal provides governance for the school in her role as proprietor. She has a clear vision for the school and is strongly committed to the preservation of its distinct ethos as it enters a new stage of development. Useful support from external advisers in finance and business has contributed to sound financial oversight, which enables the employment of sufficient staff of high quality and the provision of good resources. Strategic planning is strong and has resulted in ongoing improvements to the school's accommodation, including the acquisition of the new site and well-considered provision for the extended age range.
- 5.3 The proprietor achieves a close insight into the strengths and challenges of the school from her day-to-day involvement as principal. This enables strong and effective communication with the staff and parents. An evaluation of the school's needs has been formulated into a thorough and comprehensive development plan that indicates carefully considered provision for growth and improvement and has taken into account the views of staff, pupils and parents. Whilst the proprietor is an experienced education professional, the school lacks external educational expertise to provide additional support and challenge.
- 5.4 Good governance is weakened by deficiencies in ensuring that all statutory requirements are fulfilled. Key policies and procedures have not been reviewed and updated regularly, and recruitment checks and their recording have not been efficiently monitored. The annual review of safeguarding carried out by governors has not been carefully undertaken. Once made aware of these shortcomings, considerable effort was made by the school to rectify them so that it now has appropriate policies, including those which promote the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils, and recruitment checks are now carefully recorded.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is sound.
- 5.6 The leadership and all the staff, including those in administrative and support roles, are highly committed, and they communicate and promote the school's aims and ethos highly effectively. As a result, pupils achieve well, are happy and demonstrate a high standard of personal development for their ages.
- 5.7 At the time of the inspection, the school had undergone significant recent changes to its structure and accommodation. It was therefore at an early stage in adapting its systems and management responsibilities, and in establishing efficient liaison between its different sections. The senior leadership team members are all relatively new in post but have clear job descriptions that are appropriate for the roles they are undertaking as more responsibility is transferred to them from the leadership. Development planning indicates provision for the establishment of regular formal meetings for management issues to be discussed, information communicated between different sections and tasks delegated. Very good strategic

planning has facilitated the successful expansion of the school's facilities and provision for older pupils. The planning document is used constantly to monitor progress with projects and is added to from suggestions made by staff. Self-evaluation has not yet been formally linked to the school development plan.

- 5.8 The role of subject co-ordinators is also at an early stage. They work closely as a team and are enthusiastic about the initiatives they are taking to improve pupils' learning experience through improvements to the curriculum, teaching and learning. Their leadership is effective and beneficial in implementing the new cohesive assessment framework and trialling of an improved marking system. The school has not yet implemented planned opportunities for subject departmental meetings and peer observations to share good practice. The leadership has identified that the current appraisal system, which is limited to teachers, does not produce sufficient beneficial outcomes. Consequently, a new procedure has been devised, though is not yet under way, which includes the setting of personal targets for professional development and greater provision of training opportunities linked to the school development plan as well as personal interests. A more comprehensive induction programme which includes a mentor for new staff, and imparting information about safeguarding and health and safety as a priority, has recently been implemented. The management of pupils with SEND or EAL has been strengthened by the appointment of a trained co-ordinator for each section of the school and the provision of teaching assistants to provide additional support.
- 5.9 By the end of the inspection, the leadership had acted swiftly to rectify shortcomings identified in the school's policies and procedures and to organise a more systematic training scheme for staff in their regulatory responsibilities for safeguarding. Some past recruitment checks have not all been completed promptly and, whilst most measures to promote health and safety are implemented well, there remain some shortcomings in regulatory compliance across the school. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and who spoke to inspectors were happy with the leadership and management of the school.
- 5.10 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents indicated that they were satisfied with the education and support that the school provides.
- 5.11 Relationships between the school and parents are extremely strong; staff place great importance on clear, transparent communication, and on handling concerns promptly. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that they receive timely responses to their questions. The complaints policy is well documented and clearly sets out the school's procedures. The vast majority of parents spoken to felt that any concerns had been handled well.
- 5.12 Information for the parents of both prospective and current pupils about school life is plentiful, and takes many forms. The website provides a wealth of up-to-date information on aspects of school life. Parents also value the mobile application that offers an alternative method of communication. These, together with numerous publications such as whole-school newsletters and termly curriculum letters, ensure that parents are provided with information that keeps them abreast of the academic and pastoral aspects of the school.
- 5.13 The school arranges excellent opportunities for parents to gain insight into their children's learning and achievements. Parents of younger pupils are invited in to observe lessons, whilst parents of older pupils are invited to class presentations

given by their children. Formal parents evenings held twice each year provide parents with opportunities to discuss their children's progress, and termly reports provide them with useful information about their children's work and progress, particularly in the core subjects. Where these include targets for improvement, parents find them particularly helpful.

- 5.14 The extremely active Parent Teacher Association supports the work of the school and helps to foster a close home-school partnership. It organises a wide range of successful events throughout the school year, including a Christmas Fayre and quiz nights. Funds that are raised benefit charities as well as the school community, such as the purchase of resources for the new school library. Parents say that they feel privileged to play a part in the school's growth and development, and they appreciate the fact that the school listens to their suggestions. All parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school encourages them to be involved in its life and work, and would recommend the school to another parent.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 6.1 The setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend, including those with SEND or EAL. Staff successfully combine the Montessori philosophy with the EYFS curriculum, enabling children to learn through a wide range of activities that meet their needs well. This helps children to meet the expected level of development for their age, with many exceeding these expectations. The educational programmes are covered well, notably mathematics and literacy, where children achieve highly in relation to their age. Children undertake investigative work during planned activities. For example, in science, Nursery children fully immersed themselves in the process of dissecting a flower, and children in Reception investigated different conditions for growth. The setting has recognised that there are limited opportunities for the youngest children to use ICT. In contrast, older children benefit from weekly ICT lessons taught by a specialist, in addition to the provision of computers in the classroom. Creativity is fostered well across the EYFS through structured activities, although there are fewer opportunities for children to express themselves freely and experiment with texture and form.
- 6.2 Staff know the children in their care very well. They offer suitable support that enables children to complete activities and follow routines with growing independence. Ongoing assessment is used very well and helps staff to plan effectively for children's future learning. Staff introduce new activities to children when they assess that they are ready for the next stage in their learning and there is great focus on the individual. Staff serve as good role models. They are knowledgeable and present activities well. Consequently, children take great interest in their learning and approach activities in an enthusiastic manner. Children benefit from working in a calm and ordered environment, where they sustain concentration for suitable periods of time for their age. They approach their learning confidently, and have access to good quality and well-kept resources, from which they are able to choose freely.
- 6.3 Children's specific learning needs are considered well. Staff work with parents and specialists to ensure that strategies used in class enable children to make good progress. This includes planning provision which accurately matches the needs of children with SEND or EAL. Close working relationships exist between parents and staff, and parents greatly value the family ethos of the school. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly happy with the care and education that the setting provides. A very small minority of parents felt that they do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Inspectors found that the sharing of information begins before children attend the setting, with a questionnaire of children's interests undertaken and welcome meetings held. Across the EYFS, parents have access to their children's online assessment records, enabling them to keep up to date with their achievements. This detailed record also provides ideas for parents on how to support their children's learning at home. Parents are provided with opportunities to observe children in the setting during an annual open morning. Additionally, two-year-old checks, termly reports, twice-yearly formal parents evenings and

newsletters are amongst the wide variety of communications that inform parents about their children's achievements and progress.

6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 6.4 The contribution of the provision to children's well-being is good. All EYFS staff know the children across the classes well. Children are assigned a key person who is responsible for their care and education. These members of staff foster appropriate bonds with the children in their care, and are aware of their interests and needs. As a result, children demonstrate confidence within their surroundings from the youngest age. Classroom routines and work cycles are well developed across the EYFS age range. Consequently, good behaviour is a strength of the setting and children work well independently, alongside and with others. They are extremely confident when self-selecting activities and talking to others. Adults engage well in imaginative discussion with children, such as while making rockets in a planned creative activity, although children are given limited freedom to explore creative resources independently.
- 6.5 Staff support children effectively in adopting healthy lifestyles. Through discussions in physical education sessions, children learn how exercise affects the body. A healthy diet is encouraged through healthy snacks, and the provision of nutritious meals for those who choose to stay for lunch. The youngest children are well supported in their developing independence whilst undertaking personal hygiene routines, for example, whilst washing hands before lunch. Older children ably undertake such tasks for themselves, for example, whilst opening their own food containers at lunchtime.
- 6.6 The early emphasis on developing independence means that children are prepared well for the transition to the next stage of their education. The transition from the younger to the older Nursery class is supported by the shared afternoon sessions that enable staff and children from both sites to mix. The move to Reception is facilitated by small group visits during the summer term. Some shared lessons in Reception and Year 1 continue this preparation and facilitate the move for children.

6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 6.7 Leadership and management of the provision require improvement. The leadership demonstrates vision and drive for future development. However, due regard has not always been paid to ensuring that the EYFS regulatory requirements have been met. Whilst many of the shortcomings, once identified, were addressed during the inspection, not all were fully implemented. The leadership and management structure has recently been revised and includes a newly created post of EYFS co-ordinator. Consequently, many systems have still to be developed and embedded in practice. All staff in the setting use a very good planning and assessment system. This includes a method which cross refers the Montessori curriculum with the learning and development requirements of the EYFS.
- 6.8 Systems for safeguarding children's welfare are well understood by staff, who know who to consult should they have any concerns. Whilst the environment is appropriately maintained, and overall sufficient numbers of staff are in place, there are occasions when their deployment means that groups exceed the required ratios. The school has now put into place systems to rectify this. In the Nursery, adequate numbers of staff hold a paediatric first-aid qualification. However, whilst there are

sufficient numbers of first-aid trained staff in the main building, where children in Reception are taught, no staff member currently has specific paediatric first-aid training.

- 6.9 The setting has a detailed development plan, and staff demonstrate a clear desire for continual improvement. Self-evaluation has not been formally undertaken, although the school has identified this as an area for development to inform the setting's priorities. An appraisal system provides staff with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and set targets to help improve children's future learning experiences. Opportunities for staff to meet managers on a one-to-one basis regularly to discuss planning and the children in their care are currently lacking. The setting works closely with parents to ensure that children who require it receive appropriate external support. Staff value the close working relationships that they have with external professionals and recognise the considerable benefit that such partnerships provide for children.

6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 6.10 The overall quality and standards of the provision are good. Children make extremely good progress in relation to their starting points. The youngest children demonstrate enthusiasm for letters and books. Older children confidently write sentences independently, demonstrating an excellent awareness of basic punctuation. They benefit from daily reading practice both in school and at home. Children's mathematical skills are integrated into everyday activities; younger children count everyday objects during story time, and those who are older complete addition and subtraction problems up to ten. By the end of the EYFS, the majority of children meet the expected levels of development across the areas of learning, with many children exceeding these goals.
- 6.11 Children of all ages and abilities learn at a pace that is appropriate for each of them since they are able to choose their own individual activities. Staff place great importance in providing appropriate support for those children who need it; consequently, the needs of children with SEND or EAL are met extremely well.
- 6.12 Children's personal development is very good. They demonstrate great confidence in their environment, are calm and happy learners and respond well to adults' high expectations. They know who to approach if they need assistance and are very comfortable in the care of the staff. Staff clearly care for the children in the setting, and are vigilant in their safeguarding of the children. However, at the time of the inspection, some welfare systems were not found to be implemented consistently to meet the requirements fully. The school has begun to adapt its practice to address these issues. Since the most recent inspection, undertaken by Ofsted, the setting has been successful in ensuring that the necessary actions and recommendations identified have been met. The ambition of the leadership and management of the setting to drive improvement in order to enhance children's experiences is reflected in the developmental plans in place.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.13 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those responsible for the registered provision must:

- ensure that there is a paediatric first aider on all sites where EYFS children are present;
- ensure that correct adult to child ratios are maintained consistently;
- implement a programme for one-to-one staff supervision meetings.

Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision other than take the action specified above.