



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

THE LYCEUM

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Lyceum

Full Name of School	The Lyceum		
DfE Number	204/6401		
Address	The Lyceum 6 Paul Street Shoreditch London EC2A 4JH		
Telephone Number	020 72471588		
Email Address	admin@lyceumschool.co.uk		
Head	Mr Edwin Brown		
Proprietor	Minerva Education		
Age Range	3 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	101		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (48 boys; 53 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	17	5-11: 84
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	101	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Christina Bailey		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	30 Sep 2014 to 03 Oct 2014		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. This is the first full inspection carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

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 Linda Donowho

Mr David Rose

Miss Lucy Sumner

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector Head, ISA school

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Lyceum is an independent day school for boys and girls age 3 to 11 years. It is situated in the City of London, near to Old Street and Shoreditch and close to Liverpool Street station. The school was founded 17 years ago by the previous proprietors who were also the head teachers. Since the previous inspection, the ownership of the school has changed. In January 2014, the school became part of the Minerva Education of schools, whose directors now act as the governors of the school. A new head took up his post in September 2014.
- 1.2 The school aims to ensure that within a broad and balanced curriculum, each child's talents are discovered and nurtured and they achieve their potential in terms of spiritual awareness, academic achievement and aesthetic appreciation. It aims to develop in children the skills which will equip them for the next stage of their lives whilst developing a responsible and independent attitude towards work and their future roles in society with a positive attitude to behaviour, based on traditional manners.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 101 pupils on roll, of whom 48 were boys and 53 girls. Of these, 17 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), some of whom attend part-time. Pupils are drawn from the Islington, Hackney and Stoke Newington areas and a growing number from the Barbican. They come predominantly from business and professional families. The majority of pupils are of white British ethnicity and a significant proportion is drawn from a range of other nationalities and cultures. The ability profile of the school is generally above the national average, with a wide range of abilities represented.
- 1.4 The school has identified six pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and all receive additional support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. It has identified eight pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), two of whom receive support.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is good, including that of the EYFS. The school fulfils its aim to encourage its pupils to develop curiosity, a drive to learn, confidence, independence and a strong work ethic. Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills most effectively, supported by the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences that the school provides. Pupils are organised, show initiative and co-operate exceedingly well. The broad, balanced and vibrant curriculum is excellent and covers all the requisite areas of learning, although provision for the teaching of ICT and design technology is limited. There are many cross-curricular links, including those between history, music and creativity. The curriculum is suitable for all ages and abilities and is supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities giving many sporting and musical opportunities. Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is good and pupils are well provided for in their lessons as well as being withdrawn for extra support when necessary. Good teaching strongly promotes pupils' progress, and together with the curriculum, supports pupils' achievements well. Since the previous inspection, class teachers regularly monitor pupils' progress in order to identify and provide for their needs; however, the organisation of the school's range of data does not easily facilitate the monitoring of pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- 2.2 From the EYFS onwards, the pupils' personal development is excellent. Within an atmosphere of friendship, respect and trust, pupils become confident, articulate and considerate young people. In line with the school's aims, they develop a responsible attitude towards their future roles in society. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is high, and pupils have a strong awareness of their responsibilities to others less fortunate. They fully appreciate their own and others' cultural heritage both in school and out, underpinned by the schools aim for its pupils to develop tolerance and understanding towards each other and all members of the wider community. Pupils' excellent relationships with each other and with the staff are supported by the outstanding pastoral care shown by teaching and non-teaching staff. In the EYFS, children have the confidence to talk and play with all adults and each other, due to their overall sense of well-being. Day-to-day practice in the safeguarding of pupils is good, and welfare, health and safety policies and procedures are strong.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is sound. The new proprietors, in their role as governors, are developing their responsibilities, in order that the required systems are in place to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. During the inspection, they quickly responded to the need to complete the necessary recruitment checks that had not, in the past, been undertaken sufficiently rigorously for a small number of staff. They are extremely supportive of the school and its staff and are strongly committed to the success of the school. Leadership and management, including most aspects of that of the EYFS, are good. The new head and his management team have worked closely together to create an environment where pupils thrive and enjoy their learning. They recognise the need to monitor and evaluate current practice to further enable them to consider and prioritise the next stages of the school's development. In the EYFS, the programme for the supervision of staff lacks formal review meetings to help enable high quality practice and best outcomes for children. Curriculum co-ordinators monitor the content and planning of their subject but they have insufficient opportunities to monitor the teaching, given their own teaching

commitments. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, an overwhelming majority of parents confirmed that they are highly satisfied with the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:

- implement all required recruitment checks in respect of peripatetic staff before they begin work [Part 4 paragraph 19.(2)(a) and (c) and 19.(3), under the Suitability of staff and proprietors; and for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b), under Welfare health and safety].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Evaluate current practice in order to identify strengths and prioritise areas for improvement.
2. Refine the assessment system in order to more easily track each pupil's progress.
3. Implement a system to enable curriculum co-ordinators to monitor the teaching of their subjects.
4. In the EYFS, put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff to include formal review meetings

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 In line with its aims, the school is successful in encouraging its pupils to develop curiosity, a drive to learn, confidence, independence and a strong work ethic. Pupils achieve at least good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and in a varied range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points, including those with SEND or EAL. Almost all children reach the expected level of development for their age across all seven areas of learning, and many exceed this standard. They are enthusiastic and enjoy opportunities to play and explore. The youngest children in particular are active learners, whilst children throughout the EYFS show motivation to learn. Children are articulate and able to express themselves clearly. The youngest children can accurately count a small group of objects. Some are able to write some or all of the letters of their names. In the outdoor classroom, they are confident to explore the undergrowth, using magnifying glasses to look for mini-beasts. Children in Reception can spell simple words and the more able children can write them down, using recognisable letters, some of which are formed correctly. They are starting to read books independently, using their phonic knowledge to decode some words accurately. They can recognise and describe the properties of common 2-D shapes, including a hexagon, and can work together to sort them.
- 3.4 Throughout the school, pupils achieve good levels of literacy and numeracy. As pupils move through the school, they read and write with increasing fluency and for a widening range of purposes. They have excellent writing skills; their free writing is imaginative and they display a mature vocabulary. Pupils demonstrate extremely high levels of speaking and listening skills, as was witnessed in the assembly based on the Romans and performed partly in Latin.
- 3.5 Older pupils are highly articulate and use group and class discussions to present critical and thoughtful ideas. Mathematical development is good. Pupils manipulate numbers competently and apply their knowledge skilfully in a range of investigative tasks and problem solving, including work in other subjects. They regularly discuss their methods and strategies with partners considering the best solutions. Pupils' reasoning skills are very good, particularly when asking searching questions of their teachers. Pupils show good skills of historical enquiry, enthusing about the opportunities to experience living history during their many trips and visits to places of historical interest.
- 3.6 Information and communication technology (ICT) is used confidently and imaginatively in some areas of the curriculum but opportunities to develop skills are not provided consistently well. Pupils' creative skills are well developed, particularly in music, which is a strength of the school. From an early age all pupils learn to read music and play at least one instrument; many achieve high grades in external music examinations. They regularly listen to and appreciate music by famous composers. The school choirs sing with a high level of confidence and relish the opportunities provided to perform in concerts. Achievement in design technology is limited due to facilities and space, although the school is creative in offering opportunities whenever possible, often at other venues.

- 3.7 Achievement, both at home and within school, is celebrated and strongly encouraged. Pupils achieve high standards in a range of extra-curricular activities and these have a positive impact on their social skills. Games and physical education skills are well developed across the school in a variety of sports, including tennis, football, hockey, swimming and judo. The school has recently taken part in its first triathlon.
- 3.8 The attainment of pupils cannot be measured in relation to performance in national tests, but based on the work seen in lessons, interviews with pupils and in their books, together with the school's tracking data, their attainment is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. This includes pupils with SEND or EAL who are given good help by their class teachers or learning support staff. More able pupils make rapid progress within the small classes because individual teachers plan work appropriate to their needs.
- 3.9 Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning, enjoying the work that they do and working well without close supervision, whether on their own or as part of a group.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 The curriculum is highly effective in covering all the requisite areas of learning. It is suitable for all ages and abilities, making a significant contribution to pupils' achievements and fulfilling the school's aims. It is supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Schemes of work, including that for the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme, are detailed and support learning for pupils of all abilities. Pupils' linguistic ability is strongly enhanced by the provision of French from Nursery and Latin from Year 5, and the opportunity to study Mandarin is a popular extra-curricular activity. The history curriculum across all ages is a notable strength of the school.
- 3.12 In the EYFS, the recently refurbished classroom provides children with a bright, well-organised space, with a good range of accessible, age-appropriate resources. A further area in the indoor communal hall, known as the courtyard, is available at certain times of the day for more active play, such as pedalled toys and large blocks. The curriculum reflects national guidance and is further enhanced by imaginative use of local facilities for outdoor provision and a range of extra-curricular activities, outings and visitors. Educational technology, including school computers and programmable toys, provides the children with enhanced opportunities for learning.
- 3.13 For older pupils, curriculum oversight and effective collaborative planning for the long, medium and short terms ensures that work covered is well-structured and wide-ranging. Throughout the school there is a significant focus on cross-curricular links and a strong thematic approach. This gives pupils opportunities to use and practise their developing skills, as in a mathematics lesson on perimeters that imaginatively linked to the pupils' study of the Romans. Whilst the school's on-site facilities are limited, particularly that for outside activities, the creative use of time, space and of off-site venues substantially enriches the curriculum. The 'Living History' residential visits tailored by Lyceum staff, taking place during topics such as the Victorians, the Tudors and World War Two, provide excellent opportunities for deepening understanding and exploring themes using drama, art, history and design technology. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to express their creativity in art,

drama and music and all pupils play at least one instrument. Several choirs, including a chamber choir, the school orchestra and a big band, provide pupils with many opportunities to perform together on a regular basis.

- 3.14 The curriculum is enriched by an excellent programme of educational trips and visits, locally, nationally and internationally. The school's curriculum is further supported through a range of physical activities. All pupils take part in a very wide range of daily activities which include tennis, netball and swimming and field sports such as rounders, football and athletics. Other activities include judo, sailing and ice skating.
- 3.15 Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported and their needs are monitored well. They have individual education plans that are reviewed regularly and, when appropriate, programmes of study are adapted to meet their needs. More able pupils are identified and benefit from the targeted provision of extension work in lessons.
- 3.16 The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. A wide variety of clubs is available, complementing lessons effectively and meeting the school's holistic aim to develop the whole child and giving all pupils access to sporting, creative and academic pursuits.
- 3.17 The school maintains positive links with the local and wider community, including trips and visits into central London, for example, to the local library, museums and galleries, as well as to London theatres. They frequently use more immediate places of interest, including a local artist's studio and gallery and a well known historic cemetery and park, to further support the curriculum.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.19 Teaching is effective in promoting the pupils' progress and supports the school's aim of ensuring that each child's talents are discovered and nurtured and that they achieve their potential in terms of spiritual awareness, academic achievement and aesthetic appreciation.
- 3.20 In the EYFS, staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve. Staff are enthusiastic; they engage and motivate the children to be inquisitive, active learners, thus enabling them to acquire the skills and capacity to learn and develop effectively. Through regular observation, assessment and planning, they match individual children's needs and interests to appropriate activities and teaching methods, to enable them to make good progress in reaching their goals and to prepare them for the next stage in their learning.
- 3.21 The teachers' subject knowledge throughout is invariably strong, and they make good use of a wide range of resources, both in and out of school. Learning resources for, and the use of, ICT by pupils and staff in lessons are limited. The school is aware of this and has provided specialist teaching support to develop ICT across the school. This is proving successful and older pupils now have opportunities to develop their technical skills in producing their own apps, blogs and ebooks.
- 3.22 In most lessons, lively and enthusiastic teaching enables all pupils to achieve well. Lessons are well planned with a suitable range of activities that encourage pupils to

remain focused. Most teachers use questioning well to check on the progress being made. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect, as is humour, and these add to the pupils' enjoyment of the topics being studied. In most lessons pupils are given opportunities to discuss and explore ideas, sharing opinions with others. Most lessons are undertaken at a brisk pace and teaching responds effectively to pupils' differing learning needs, providing good opportunities for support and challenge. Pupils are consistently encouraged to make the most of their intellectual, physical and creative talents. In a small number of lessons, opportunities for independence and interaction were limited and a lack of pace and challenge resulted in pupils making less progress than they should. Opportunities for pupil-initiated independent investigation are not provided consistently across year groups.

- 3.23 Assessment is an area which is being developed. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, teachers now regularly assess their pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and mathematics. However, there is not yet an easily accessible whole school recording system in place in order to better support the process. The school are aware of this and are beginning to develop an appropriate system. There are guidelines for marking work but these are not consistently applied. In the best examples clear, evaluative written comments and targets for progress are given and the pupils receive oral feedback in lessons. They say that they know what they need to do to improve and find the teachers' comments helpful.
- 3.24 Behaviour is very well managed; relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils of all abilities are confident about asking for help, and in interviews many expressed their appreciation for the way staff support their learning.
- 3.25 The small number of pupils with SEND who require individual education plans and provision maps are well supported within the classroom and they benefit from speech and language therapy input where required. There is an effective programme to support pupils identified as having EAL needs and fluency in English is quickly achieved. The most able pupils are challenged through targeted activities and open-ended investigations in lessons, enabling them to make rapid progress and maintain their interest throughout lessons.

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 Pupils exhibit a high degree of personal development, in accordance with the school's aims. Pupils are responsible, well mannered and tolerant, and work together in harmony, developing a sense of responsibility for others and the wider world. They are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education and they leave school as confident and well-balanced young people. In the EYFS, key people work closely with all parents to ensure that children settle in quickly and transfer smoothly from Reception to Year 1.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They show strong empathy with non-material aspects of life, giving mature and considered responses when asked about their feelings in relation to music and art. They are confident and speak with great enthusiasm about their work and the school. Pupils often evaluate and reflect upon their own achievements and offer mature, self-critical observations of their work and behaviour. They carefully consider the values and beliefs of faiths other than their own, and the well-planned programme of religious education adds to the pupils' development.
- 4.4 The pupils' excellent moral awareness starts in the EYFS with an emphasis on the importance of sharing and consideration. Moral development is at the heart of the life of the school and is carefully nurtured through class assemblies, discussion groups, the PSHCE programme and through the many opportunities to discuss moral issues throughout the curriculum. Around school, pupils are well aware that their actions have consequences and may affect the rights and needs of others, and during lessons pupils are highly supportive of each other. The school has made a deliberate decision to use informal and flexible strategies to promote caring relationships and this has allowed an air of genuine friendship to exist between the pupils.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is excellent; they have a great sense of being in a school family that extends from the start of the EYFS to Year 6. They recognise that they form part of a strong community where they are valued as individuals, so that they show high levels of care for each other, willingly offering help if they see someone in difficulty. From an early age the pupils develop excellent co-operative team work skills in choirs and orchestras, and in classroom activities. All pupils respond well to informal responsibilities as they help around the school. A school council has recently been elected and pupils are delighted to have this opportunity to share decisions for the school. They say they feel valued, they have a voice within their school community and that staff listen to their ideas. Their personal behaviour is exemplary and they show great consideration to each other. Pupils are enthusiastic when raising money for charities chosen by the school community as a whole. They are very clear about the difference their support makes to the lives of those less fortunate than themselves through their links with charities at home and abroad. Pupils show a growing appropriate understanding of the public institutions and services in England.
- 4.6 Pupils show excellent cultural development, and are sensitive to and respectful of cultural differences within the school community. Pupils have a good understanding and valuing of the achievements of their own and different cultures and faiths.

Teaching makes good use of the opportunities afforded by the harmonious relationships seen amongst pupils from different cultural backgrounds within the school. The wide and varied programme of educational visits to museums and places of other faiths and cultural interests, and various residential trips abroad, further helps pupils to appreciate their own and other traditions and cultures. Pupils enjoy studying the work of different genres in art and music from across ages and continents. As a result, they understand the Western cultural tradition as well as those of other backgrounds.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school's welcoming and friendly ethos reflects its aim to develop tolerance and understanding towards each other and all members of the wider community; and to develop a positive attitude to behaviour based on traditional manners. Every parent who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their child was well looked after and that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are respectful and inclusive. In this close-knit community, staff have a thorough understanding of individual pupils' needs which enables them to provide highly effective support and guidance. The caring secure environment, in which smiles and laughter are a significant part of school life, provides a fully supportive backdrop to promote learning.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, children have the confidence to talk and play with all adults and each other, due to their overall sense of well-being and the strong bonds formed with each child's key person. Behaviour is managed effectively and when necessary, staff use gentle reminders and sound strategies to help children make their own choices regarding their behaviour. Staff encourage children to take turns and, as a result, they generally play co-operatively and understand the need to share. Children show respect for one another. Staff place a high priority on independence and children are encouraged to try to do things for themselves or to ask a friend.
- 4.10 During interviews and conversations, pupils talked about the high quality supportive relationships that staff foster and the guidance they offer. Pupils, including those in the EYFS, were clear to whom they could turn with a concern. The school has a strong commitment to promoting positive behaviour. Strong friendships exist amongst pupils; the older ones are particularly helpful towards the younger ones. Rewards and sanctions are simple and fair. Approaches such as the 'traffic light' system, together with classroom codes of conduct which are decided by pupils, effectively promote positive behaviour amongst the pupils, who have a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour and report that bullying or harassment of any kind are extremely rare. They say that if any such incidents were to occur, they would be dealt with promptly and fairly.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles. Although the school has no outside play area, it makes excellent and imaginative use of outside venues close to the school to ensure that pupils have daily opportunities for a variety of physical activities. Pupils of all ages understand the importance of regular exercise. All lunches and snacks are brought from home, although staff monitor what pupils eat and encourage parents to provide healthy foods.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.13 The school, including the EYFS, has a well-developed and effective system to provide for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils and this has a significant effect from the earliest age on the pupils' personal development. Throughout, the well-being of pupils is central to the school's concern and its procedures for ensuring this contributes to the happiness of the pupils, as expressed in the school's aims.
- 4.14 Effective attention is paid to safeguarding pupils and promoting their health and well-being. The school's child protection policy has been recently updated and now fully meets the latest requirements, but procedures for its annual review by governors is not yet fully established. In the past, the policy has not always been correctly implemented when recruiting staff. By the end of the inspection, all required checks had been completed and recorded in line with official guidance.
- 4.15 All staff know the child protection procedures and they have regular training to update their understanding. Those with specific responsibilities are trained to a higher level. The school has strong links with the local authority, which ensures that it is able to give very high priority to the protection of children throughout the school.
- 4.16 The school has thorough arrangements for reducing the risk from fire and accidents. It holds regular fire practices and the relevant equipment is checked at appropriate intervals. Health and safety are given a high priority, with detailed risk assessments for areas of the school and school activities. Arrangements for health and safety are managed by the head together with the recently formed health and safety committee. At present this has no representation from the board of governors. The school has suitable arrangements for any pupils who are ill or injured. It gives careful attention to any pupils who have particular medical or learning support needs.
- 4.17 The admission and attendance registers are completed correctly archived as required.
- 4.18 All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children feel safe at school.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 Since the purchase of the school, executive directors in their role as governors understand the need to provide effective and efficient oversight of the school and demonstrate an understanding of its systems and structures and how it meets its aims. They have been successful in their appointment of a new head in order to maintain this ethos and further develop the school. They are determined to offer support and guidance whilst bringing challenge to the school leadership and management. In these early days of the new governance, specific roles with regard to supporting particular aspects of school life have not yet been identified, including that for safeguarding and the EYFS.
- 5.3 Centralised financial planning and direction by Minerva provide support to the school and there has been appropriate investment in staff, accommodation and resources, as seen in facilitating the substantial new building improvements undertaken just prior to the inspection. The centrally produced policies are of good quality, and good use is made of outside expertise in matters such as fire prevention and risk assessment. Whilst regular meetings with all the heads in the group allow an exchange of ideas, in order that group strategy with regard to monitoring all aspects of school life can be agreed, this has not yet been fully developed and systems and arrangements have yet to be finalised.
- 5.4 Those with responsibility for governance take their responsibilities for welfare and health and safety seriously. However, there are as yet no formal systems in place for the annual review of the safeguarding policy and arrangements. During the inspection, the directors reacted swiftly and decisively to rectify a failure to implement fully the safeguarding policy when recruiting staff. Appropriate checks have now been undertaken and 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 is good.
- 5.6 The school successfully meets its aim of ensuring that each pupil's talents are discovered and nurtured and they achieve their potential in terms of spiritual awareness, academic achievement and aesthetic appreciation. The newly appointed head and the established management team form a strong unit enabling the school to further develop under the new ownership of the school, whilst maintaining the school's distinctive aims and ethos.
- 5.7 A sense of unity has been established and the members of the leadership team are approachable and accessible and their passion and commitment to the school are apparent in the strong pastoral care and personal development of pupils across the school. Staff share a common goal of providing a positive and caring learning experience for each individual pupil, and value the way in which the school celebrates pupils' talents and raises self-esteem. They recognise the sense of community, which helps to create the excellent attitudes pupils have towards their learning.

- 5.8 The new leadership team recognises the need to fully update the previous development plan, undertaking a thorough review to identify the school's key strengths and those areas in need of improvement. The resulting plan for development is intended to provide a new vision for school improvement and educational priorities for the future, with whole school involvement in the process. It is too early to see the impact of these initiatives.
- 5.9 In the EYFS, evaluation of the provision by early years staff is continual and ongoing, and they aspire to improve. There is, however, currently no up-to-date self-evaluation process to identify priorities, strengths and weaknesses and to set challenging targets for improvement. Monitoring of the educational programmes is effective on a day-to-day basis and ensures that staff are consistently delivering the best possible curriculum for the children. The appraisal system is effective in supporting the professional development of staff. However, the setting lacks a programme that includes formal review meetings to help enable high quality practice and best outcomes for children.
- 5.10 The documentation for curriculum planning across the school is detailed and comprehensive, matching work well to pupils' differing abilities and needs. Subject co-ordinators have a good oversight of their subjects and manage them well, although, most are class teachers and have only a limited time to do this. In the past, the monitoring of teaching and learning has been regularly undertaken by management and contributed to a comprehensive appraisal system. In this transitional period of the school many of these systems are under review.
- 5.11 Policies and procedures for most aspects of school life have been recently been reviewed and improved. The safeguarding of pupils throughout the school is enhanced through the emphasis given to training in child protection and health and safety. Recruitment procedures which are carried out centrally are generally effective. The school successfully retains and recruits suitable staff. At the time of the inspection not all recruitment procedures had been undertaken rigorously but when this was pointed out, the school immediately took appropriate steps to correct the situation.
- 5.12 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. The very strong links that exist in the EYFS enable excellent, stable relationships to develop with parents, which are maintained as pupils progress through the school.
- 5.13 The responses to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive and show that parents are highly supportive of the school. They are particularly happy with the way that their children are cared for, the communication they receive and the progress their children are making, both in their academic and emotional education. The school meets its aim to be a place where parents can be proud of their children's achievements. The majority of parents commented that they are satisfied with the way in which the school handles any concerns. The school has a suitable policy for complaints, and on the rare occasions when it has been used, concerns have been handled in line with stated procedures.
- 5.14 Throughout the school, parents have daily contact with the staff at drop-off and collection times. The school provides appropriate information to the parents of current and prospective pupils, as well as regular information on pupils' progress. Full and detailed reports are issued once a year and parents' meetings are held once a term. The parent guides produced for each stage of the children's development provide clear details of curriculum, what is required and expected, and

the role parents can play in the education of their children, so that they can be actively involved in their work and progress. A small minority of parents, in response to questionnaires, felt that opportunities to be involved in events and other aspects of school life are limited. However, inspection evidence showed that parents are welcome at a wide variety of school events, including a weekly assembly on Fridays and they are always welcome at the school to attend other special occasions. Parents receive a weekly newsletter that describes the many activities that happen at the school. These newsletters are supplemented by an informative annual magazine. A comprehensive and informative website and school brochure provide all current and prospective parents with detailed information about the school. These are currently being updated to reflect the new management arrangements.

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