



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**OAKHILL COLLEGE**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Oakhill College

Full Name of School	<b>Oakhill College</b>
DfE Number	<b>888/6012</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY312065</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1048514</b>
Address	<b>Oakhill College Wiswell Lane Whalley Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9AF</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01254 823546</b>
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Email Address	<b>enquiries@oakhillcollege.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Carmel Riley</b>
Proprietor	<b>Oakhill College, Whalley Ltd</b>
Age Range	<b>0 to 16</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>271</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (138 boys; 133 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>44</b> 5-11: <b>70</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>79</b> 11-18: <b>78</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>271</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>27 Jan 2015 to 30 Jan 2015</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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**

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Mr Paul Oldham

Mrs Karen Williams

Mr Gary Wright

Mrs Eithne Webster

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, GSA and ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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

- 1.1 Oakhill College was founded in 1978, fulfilling the need for an independent Roman Catholic day secondary school in the Clitheroe area. The Acorns Nursery was established in the school grounds in the early 1990s. Ownership of the school changed in 1998, and over the next few years the school expanded, acquiring new land (now extending to 24 acres) and developing new facilities. Paulinus House, the preparatory school, was opened in 2003. In 2007 Oakhill Academy, a sports hall and fitness suite, built for members of the local community but which also provides new facilities and resources for the pupils, was opened. The school's proprietor is Oakhill College, Whalley Ltd and there is an advisory governing body chaired by the chairman of the company.
- 1.2 The school seeks to provide a holistic education, committed to offering a Catholic education for life at school and beyond whilst welcoming all faiths. It aims to provide a happy, safe and stimulating education within a family environment; to develop spiritual awareness, encourage self-worth and challenge pupils to achieve; to instil mutual respect and understanding, and teach the value of service to others. Focusing upon the needs of pupils as individuals is a hallmark of its ethos.
- 1.3 The school has 271 pupils on roll, aged from 0 to 16: 138 boys and 133 girls. Of this total number 123 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for pupils up to the age of five. The preparatory school (prep), comprising Years 1 to 6, has 70 pupils and the senior school, containing Years 7 to 11, has 78 pupils. Pupils come from the local rural and urban areas, with a number from ethnic minorities reflecting the make-up of the local population.
- 1.4 The ability range overall is similar to the national average, although with some variation from year to year, so that in some years the ability is above the national average. Fifty pupils are identified as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and five have statements of special educational needs. All pupils with SEND receive extra support for their learning. At present no pupils have English as an additional language.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, the school has considerably expanded its provision for EYFS; and it is making extensive use of tablet computers in order to enhance learning throughout the prep and senior schools.
- 1.6 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 pupils' achievements and learning are good; standards of attainment have improved in recent years and they are outstanding in EYFS. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are successful in their learning and personal development, and they become articulate and confident learners. The school fully meets its aim to provide a happy, safe and stimulating education within a family environment in which pupils are challenged to achieve. Pupils, including those with SEND, make good progress as they develop positive attitudes, being eager to learn and displaying excellent levels of concentration. Good curricular and extra-curricular provision provides ample opportunities for pupils to flourish both in and beyond the classroom. Although good use is made of assessment, full use is yet to be made of systematic methods of tracking and monitoring. The school is aware it needs to develop this area further. Pupils are strongly supported by the excellent quality of teaching throughout the school. Links with the local community are strong and the pupils benefit from an enriching range of trips and visits.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school fully meets its aim of developing spiritual awareness within a cohesive community, whilst instilling mutual respect and understanding. The school has a strong Catholic ethos but is responsive to the beliefs and needs of other faiths. Service to others permeates the daily life of the school. The school council provides an extremely effective pupil voice in the senior part of the school; as yet there is no equivalent forum in the prep school. The arrangements for pastoral care, including those in EYFS, are excellent. Standards of behaviour are exemplary. The school's anti-bullying policy encompasses cyber-bullying. Pupils appreciate the approach taken and reported that the infrequent cases of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school. The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. Through their pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated overwhelming support for the school's approach to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. Pupils reported in questionnaires and interviews that they felt safe and liked attending the school.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are excellent. Governors understand their legal responsibilities and discharge their duties effectively. A strategic objectives plan conveys a strong vision for the school's future. Since the previous inspection the governors, working closely with leaders and managers, have expanded significantly the provision for EYFS. Members of staff have participated in the development of the school's improvement plan, as recommended by the previous inspection. The school is aware of the need to implement fully the appraisal system, as well as supervision in EYFS. Parents in their pre-inspection questionnaire were wholehearted in their appreciation for the school's leadership. The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. With a very small number of exceptions, parents were most appreciative of all aspects of the school's provision for their children.

**2.(b) Action points****(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

**(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop improved systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress which are consistent with the school's high ambitions for its pupils.
2. Identify a means of providing an effective forum for the pupil voice for those pupils in the prep school.
3. Implement fully the system of appraisal, linked to continuous professional development, to create a culture of reflection and evaluation.
4. Implement fully the recently established system of supervision meetings in EYFS.

### **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 successfully educated in line with the school's aims to challenge all abilities and needs and to encourage self-esteem and challenge. All pupils, including the youngest, are articulate and express themselves both confidently and clearly. Pupils of all ages develop a good standard of knowledge, understanding and skill across all subject areas. Pupils are articulate and develop good skills in mathematics, logical thought, reading and writing. Many senior pupils show exemplary organisational and leadership abilities in a variety of school events and activities.
- 3.3 Where pupils are sufficiently challenged, independent thinking is extended well, but this is not done consistently in all subject areas across the prep and senior schools. Pupils demonstrate good physical and creative skills. ICT skills are used imaginatively to research and present their work: the introduction of tablet computers for all pupils from Year 3 provides ample opportunities for this. Pupils achieve success in national academic events, such as the UK Mathematics Challenge and take part in other competitions such as Young Enterprise. Several pupils are successful at local and county levels across a spectrum of extra-curricular activities, including ice hockey, football and orienteering. Pupils also achieve success in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) and music examinations. When they leave the school most pupils go on to further and sixth-form education in local schools and colleges.
- 3.4 In the prep school, the pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests. However, evidence from nationally standardised progress data, lesson observations, work scrutiny and interviews with pupils, shows that attainment is similar to national age-related expectations for pupils of similar ability and that they make good progress in light of their abilities and needs.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Over this period, pupils' performance at GCSE was in line with the national average for pupils in maintained schools, and in 2013, their performance was above the national average for pupils in maintained schools. The results improved further in 2014. This level of attainment at GCSE, supported by inspection evidence, indicates that pupils make progress that is good compared with pupils of similar abilities and needs.
- 3.6 The evidence from work scrutiny and achievement in lessons shows that day-to-day progress for pupils with SEND and those who are more able is at least good and sometimes excellent. Pupils who have SEND benefit both from the specialist and targeted support they receive and from the increased self-confidence they gain from their whole-school experience. In particular, they achieve well in examinations and make good progress in lessons. The achievement of more able pupils is facilitated in lessons where they are significantly challenged with open-ended tasks, such as a Year 7 investigation into the characteristics of heat flow from different types of hat. Such tasks allow pupils to take the initiative and work both independently and collaboratively with others, but this is not consistent in all subjects or across the entire school.

- 3.7 Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and they apply themselves to their work with evident pride, as shown in the quality of their presentation. When given the opportunity, pupils show initiative and work effectively on their own, in pairs, in small groups and with their teachers. Pupils are eager to learn and have excellent concentration. Pupils in the senior school can evaluate their work in a coherent and sensible manner; they are also sensitive to the abilities of others when they are sharing their ideas and views.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curriculum is highly effective in its coverage of different areas of learning. It is very well planned, suitable for all ages, abilities and needs including for those with SEND, and supports the aims of the school well. Throughout the school, a broad and balanced curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating opportunities.
- 3.10 The parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire demonstrated an extremely high level of satisfaction with both curricular and extra-curricular provision. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils expressed satisfaction with the extra-curricular opportunities available to them throughout the school.
- 3.11 Since the previous inspection, the school has increased the range of academic subjects available, for example introducing modern foreign languages from the Nursery, and it has provided a wider range of sports and extra-curricular activities which has helped to ensure that the educational experience is of consistently high quality for all pupils.
- 3.12 The use of specialist teaching for younger pupils enhances their learning. The curriculum in the prep school prepares pupils very well for entry to the senior school and is set out in excellent schemes of work. Pupils in the senior school benefit from a broad and varied curriculum, which ensures that all the requisite areas of learning are covered successfully. The recent introduction of GCSE 'triple award' science has challenged further the more able. Pupils are encouraged to choose according to their strengths and interests. The high pupil to staff ratios across the school greatly assists those pupils wishing to consolidate their knowledge or skills.
- 3.13 The careers programme prepares pupils effectively for further education and the world of work. The comprehensive PSHE curriculum provides an excellent basis for the pupils' personal development and promotes an understanding of British values and institutions. Provision for ICT is excellent: the school is continuing to develop the use of a collaborative learning platform with tablet computers for pupils to ensure that ICT is embedded in all subject areas.
- 3.14 The needs of pupils with SEND are identified well and made known to their teachers. Excellent provision is made for pupils with SEND through targeted individual lessons and more general support within the curriculum. Opportunities for the more able outside the classroom in the extra-curricular programme are extensive, but in lessons these pupils are not always presented with sufficiently challenging tasks or given the opportunity to pursue independent lines of inquiry.
- 3.15 The curriculum is supported by an enriching range of extra-curricular activities, which supports the pupils' wider development well. For drama and music, pupils regularly participate in the local Blackburn Music and Speech and Drama Festival as well as in biannual whole-school productions. In Years 10 and 11 a high number of

pupils participate in the DofE award programme at bronze and silver levels. Pupils participate in sporting activities as diverse as football, swimming, motor-cross, jujitsu, ballet, ice hockey, skiing and orienteering.

- 3.16 The senior school council engages pupils in fundraising activities for local and national charities and has brought about initiatives such as new school recycling facilities. Younger pupils show a lively awareness of the need to help those less fortunate than themselves.
- 3.17 In both the prep and senior schools, the curriculum is strengthened by a programme of daytime trips. Pupils also have the benefit of residential experiences away from school, including an annual ski trip, adventure training weeks and a biennial school trip to Kenya. There are strong links with the local community, churches and charities, for example: working with the local parish for both worship and a joint sacramental programme; observing the Armistice and Remembrance services in local villages and supporting a food bank in a nearby town.

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

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching across the whole school is excellent.
- 3.19 Teaching is very effective in supporting the aims of the school to enable all pupils to achieve their academic potential and to be effective communicators and listeners. Most teaching is highly successful and demonstrates the highest expectations of pupils, showing in its planning considerable understanding of their individual needs and abilities. As a result, pupils of all abilities are engaged in lessons. Effective questioning, which is well suited to the pupils' abilities, extends and challenges their understanding of the topics being covered. In less successful lessons, teaching is prescriptive and opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills and support independent learning may consequently be more limited. An overall strength of the teaching is the excellent interaction and respect between pupils and teachers.
- 3.20 Subject knowledge across the school is often excellent amongst teaching staff and this wide-ranging expertise is used very well to aid pupils' learning. In most teaching a wide range of methods is used to stimulate pupils to think for themselves and to come to their own conclusions.
- 3.21 Throughout the school, highly effective teaching is provided for pupils with SEND, all of whom are given appropriate individual educational plans (IEPs). Those pupils with a statement of SEND receive an education which fulfils its requirements. Teachers are always willing to give extra help both when it is requested or when pupils are identified as finding a topic hard. The more able are well-supported by their teachers through extension tasks and individual challenges.
- 3.22 The interactive technologies are used very well to access useful resources and to involve pupils fully. The opportunities provided by the availability of tablet computers for use in lessons enhances both teaching and learning for example through the clarity of feedback to pupils often shown for marked assignments. Whilst the library resources are well managed, they are neither fully effective nor sufficiently extensive in providing a teaching resource for the promotion of research skills and individual study.
- 3.23 The previous inspection recommended that the tracking and assessment programme should be extended. This has been done, but the school is aware that it does not yet make systematic use of the all the information available. The best

marking is of a high standard, with some very detailed and constructive comments which enable pupils to see how they can improve their work. However, there remain inconsistencies with insufficiently detailed feedback given to pupils in many cases.

## **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 are polite and articulate with a real desire to communicate with others. In accordance with the school's aims they display a sense of self-worth, mutual respect and understanding, and an awareness of the value of service to others.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are confident and reflective, talk readily about both their work and activities and demonstrate a clear understanding of the non-material aspects of life. For example, Year 3 pupils identified 'things to be thankful for' in afternoon registration, including answers such as family, friends and good health. There are daily opportunities for reflection in assemblies, registration and at the end of the day, and all pupils demonstrate an understanding of the Christian nature of the school, acquired through assemblies, religious education lessons and the Catholic ethos which permeates the school. Pupils identify their own strengths and areas for development and they readily recognise the strengths of others.
- 4.4 Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, reflecting excellent moral development. They are aware of the school's rules, and value the rewards they receive for success in adhering to them. Few sanctions are needed in the school, and their nature and use are understood and appreciated. There is a culture of mutual respect, and the school's high expectations of its pupils are implicit in all aspects of school life. Pupils are willing to take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils support each other readily because they believe it right to do so.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate a clear awareness of British institutions, and this is developed particularly purposefully through the school's PSHE programme during Years 7 to 9 and through focused assemblies in Years 10 and 11. Year 7 pupils showed a mature understanding of the ways in which their own school council elections, conducted through secret ballots in polling booths, mirror the British democratic election process.
- 4.6 British values of mutual respect and tolerance permeate the school. The school's clear expectation that pupils adhere to school rules reinforces the importance of the rule of law, and the school's PSHE and citizenship policy makes clear its commitment to actively promoting British values. The school enjoys periodic visits from members of the local police force and fire brigade explaining the work they do in the community.
- 4.7 Pupil's excellent social development means that they contribute to the life of the prep and senior schools in many ways; for example, they willingly take on positions of responsibility such as head boy and girl, house and sports captains, librarians and chaplains.
- 4.8 Pupils show considerable cultural development. They learn about other faiths and cultures in assemblies, language lessons and geography lessons. Pupils support a charity which assists the Maasai people and this has led to a greater understanding of the Kenyan culture. Prep pupils engage in weekly assemblies in which they learn about different faiths and cultures. Their understanding of these is enhanced by

clear links being made to the Christian faith, and they speak with enthusiasm and understanding about their learning in this context.

- 4.9 By the time they leave the school pupils are confident and articulate young people with a clear sense of justice, respect for others and a readiness to help those in need, showing their excellent personal development.

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

- 4.10 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.11 Relationships between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils themselves are both excellent: these are rooted in the community ethos of the school and are central to the quality of its care. Respect for others is evident in classrooms and around the school; staff and pupils of all ages speak of the school as a family. Support and guidance are readily available to pupils of all ages.
- 4.12 There are clear sanctions and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, and appropriate adjustments are made for pupils with particular individual needs. A very small minority of pupils felt that sanctions were not always fair. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of school records showed that the school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. House merits are an important incentive for all pupils, as well as identification as 'Wiz of the week' in the prep school for individual achievements.
- 4.13 Disciplinary records show that bullying is rare in the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small but significant minority of girls expressed concerns about bullying. In interviews pupils were confident that cases of bullying were infrequent but that when they did occur bullying was dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- 4.14 The school provides a range of healthy meals and pupils are taught about healthy eating and lifestyles through the PSHE scheme of work in Years 7 to 9, science in Years 1 and 2, and regular visits from the Life Education Bus. Pupils say that they get plenty of exercise, particularly through extra-curricular activities, which provide a valuable addition to timetabled lessons. Meals are nutritious, and there is a wide range of options available. The children are very positive about their food, and healthy appetites are evident in the dining room from EYFS upwards.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan in place to improve educational access for pupils with disabilities and with special educational needs.
- 4.16 A very small minority of pupils were critical of opportunities for their voice to be heard. Inspectors found that the senior school council provides an effective forum for pupil views in this part of the school. Pupils feel that their ideas are taken seriously by the school and that action is taken as a result. However, there is no equivalent forum for pupils in the prep school.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.18 The school is highly committed to ensuring the health and safety of pupils and staff, including safer recruitment. All staff have completed safeguarding training and designated safeguarding leaders have completed the appropriate advanced training. Excellent care has been taken to make pupils aware of the dangers of electronic communication and strategies are in place to ensure they are vigilant for their own welfare.
- 4.19 The school has sufficient fire extinguishers and fire exits are clearly marked. Fire practices and alarm tests are held regularly. Equipment is regularly monitored and serviced by an external consultancy. The regulations regarding the necessity to complete a whole site fire risk assessment plan have been meticulously followed.
- 4.20 Attendance registers are correctly maintained and are fully compliant with the relevant education regulations.
- 4.21 The school has appropriate facilities and qualified nursing staff to provide care for pupils who become ill during the day. A number of staff have first aid training, and some have additional qualifications such as paediatric first aid or autoinjector training. There are stringent procedures in place for the recording of the administration of medicine.
- 4.22 Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well cared for and the school has a satisfactory disability plan. Great care is taken to provide appropriately for pupils who have special medical or dietary needs.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The proprietor, directors and the advisory governing body are highly successful in supporting the aims of the school and promoting the strong ethos of the school, in which faith is central to the lives of the pupils. Whilst building upon the strengths and success of the school, the governors have developed a clear and ambitious vision for the future. Since the previous inspection, their leadership, experience and support have helped to improve the standards of education.
- 5.3 The governors have exercised active control of the school's resources, utilising the range of financial, human resources, marketing and educational experiences available to them. With a strong and supportive presence, they have an excellent insight into the day-to-day workings of the school, meeting regularly with staff, pupils and parents. Members of staff are invited to contribute to governors meetings and report on a range of educational developments.
- 5.4 Through the strategic objectives for the school, formulated within a written plan, the vision for strategic development is strong, with careful financial management embedded within the ethos and educational ambitions of the school. Since the previous inspection, governors have continued to extend the facilities and resources and supported the appointment of high quality staff: changes in the staffing profile have assisted in improving the quality of teaching and have laid down the foundations for further improvements in both the academic success of the school and the quality of the curriculum. The continuing expansion of the provision for EYFS education has been especially successful. School buildings are maintained effectively and any issues relating to health and safety are dealt with promptly.
- 5.5 Governors provide excellent support for the head both through periodic appraisal and regular contact. The directors have an active presence based within the school managing its financial and administrative operations, and other governors are regular visitors.
- 5.6 The proprietor understands its legal responsibilities to the school and maintains strong oversight of policies and procedures. The welfare, health and safety of pupils are reviewed regularly and robust procedures are in place for safeguarding. An appointed governor for safeguarding maintains close and regular contact with the school. The governors receive an annual safeguarding report and training. Members of the governing body accept the need for further training across a range of gubernatorial skills further to enhance their ability to support the school.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.8 Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in advancing the school's aims and are particularly effective in promoting a culture within which there are very high standards of pastoral care and personal development of the pupils. Leaders and managers encourage a very strong spiritual and Catholic ethos that is sensitive to other faiths and cultural traditions. The ethos of a highly supportive community, which focuses upon the individual needs of the pupils, permeates the daily life of the school.
- 5.9 Leaders and managers work most effectively to advance the school's strategic plan, which sets clear priorities for further development. Staff, pupils and parents share the leadership's vision of a school centred upon spiritual awareness, within which pupils have a real sense of self-worth, and which challenges pupils to achieve in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and of service to others.
- 5.10 The leadership and management at each of the three stages of education within the school (EYFS, prep and senior) are excellent. The constant theme is to serve the individual needs and interests of pupils of all ages and abilities, thus fully supporting the aims of the school. This focus ensures strong and active encouragement both for those with additional needs or for those with particular gifts and talents. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement with an increasing focus upon individual targets. The previous inspection recommended that the role of subject leaders and co-ordinators should be established to promote and support the highest standards in their subjects. The school has responded to this recommendation with roles for middle management being more clearly defined. Within the context of this small school, leaders and managers engage with all members of staff, promoting both curriculum and professional development.
- 5.11 The previous inspection recommended that communications between management and staff over school planning and development should be increased. Communication between leaders and staff is both efficient and effective and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. All members of staff have been involved in and have contributed to the development of the school's improvement plan. Academic data is being employed increasingly to monitor the progress of pupils and this is regarded as an important area for further development.
- 5.12 The leadership and management has worked hard to ensure that new staff appointments are of high quality and bring fresh ideas and inspiration to the school community. The leadership and management is aware of the importance of ensuring that, through supportive and regular appraisals as recommended by the previous inspection, the individual professional development needs are more effectively identified. The staff appraisal programme, which has been introduced but which is yet to be fully implemented, aims to provide appropriate professional support for members of staff and develop a culture of sharing good practice and peer classroom observation. Members of staff are encouraged to observe their peers and to discuss with their colleagues marking and assessment on a regular basis.

- 5.13 Welfare, health and safety procedures are efficiently managed. Pupils generally appreciate the healthy food prepared for them. Procedures to safeguard all pupils throughout the school are rigorous and all staff, volunteers and governors are trained in safeguarding procedures, welfare, health and safety. The checking procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors, to work with children are secure and centrally recorded as required. The school has responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection regarding the single central register.
- 5.14 The quality of links between the school and parents is excellent and strongly supports the school's aims. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive, including with regard to the provision of all the required information supplied by the school. Parents feel involved in the life of the school and there is a very active parents' association, which encourages social interaction through balls, fairs and other annual events. Regular newsletters provide an effective flow of information to parents about the life of the school and the successes of pupils. A recent tablet computer learning initiative was launched after careful and extensive consultations with parents. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure and any concerns from parents are dealt with in accordance with its procedures.
- 5.15 Detailed reports and parents' evenings keep all parents well informed of their children's progress. Reporting to parents is highly effective, with well-balanced reports offering thorough feedback and guidance on the ways for pupils to improve their subject skills and application. Parents appreciate the opportunity directly to observe through these computers how the work of their children is marked.

**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 early years provision is outstanding at meeting the needs of the range of children. All members of staff are highly committed to the children in their care. They know them and their families extremely well. This understanding of the children's development stages, together with thorough planning and excellent educational programmes, covering all the EYFS requirements, ensures that the needs of all children, including those with SEND and the most able, are met.
- 6.2 Well-qualified, experienced and enthusiastic staff provide a range of experiences to enhance the youngest children's progress, particularly in the prime areas of speech, physical and social development.
- 6.3 For the older children, practitioners have high expectations. They provide a stimulating range of high quality activities, and employ varied teaching strategies, including well-targeted interventions for those with additional needs, to ensure that children develop their imagination and problem solving skills, become eager learners and progress well.
- 6.4 The required checks for two year olds are fully implemented and parents given an opportunity to discuss the findings with the child's key person.
- 6.5 In the pre-inspection questionnaires a very small minority of parents felt that they did not receive sufficient information about their child's progress. Scrutiny of documentation during the inspection found that parents are given detailed accounts, including photographs, of the various activities, cross-referenced to Early Years profile levels. Parents are encouraged to be fully engaged in their children's experiences in EYFS. The youngest children have sheets that provide a daily record of care and activities for parents.

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

- 6.6 The contribution of the EYFS provision to children's well being is outstanding. The 'key person' system and the warm relationships throughout EYFS enable all children to form secure emotional bonds enabling them to explore, learn and develop. They behave extremely well and learn to share.
- 6.7 The children are extremely well looked after. For the younger children care with hygiene is prompt and personal, while older children are fully supported to develop independence in this area.
- 6.8 Close attention is paid to providing healthy and nutritious food which is served in the familiar cosy atmosphere of their rooms and, for older children in the main dining hall alongside older pupils and adults.

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

- 6.9 The leadership and management of EYFS is outstanding. Governors take a close and effective interest and support the leadership as it strives to improve achievement for all children.
- 6.10 Close attention is paid to ensuring that all aspects of the learning and development requirements are implemented. Outstanding care is taken to implement and monitor the safeguarding and welfare regulations so that the EYFS is welcoming, stimulating and safe.
- 6.11 A culture of self-evaluation and staff training is encouraged by the leadership and management.
- 6.12 A system of supervision has been introduced for all practitioners to ensure that they are supported as they evaluate the impact of their practice on the children in their care. This system is not yet fully embedded but the school is aware of the need to do this.
- 6.13 Children's needs are identified rapidly and exemplary partnerships exist between the school, parents and external agencies to assess formally any children who may have special needs, so that early interventions are secured and children can make excellent progress.

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

- 6.14 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are outstanding. Children, including those with SEND, achieve very well relative to the starting points. Younger children show excellent understanding of the mathematical language of comparison, describing the differences between Daddy Bear's and Baby Bear's chair and bowl. Reception children can recognise numbers to 10 (in both English and Spanish) with some using higher numbers. Specialist teaching enables them to achieve high standards in both music and PE. A recommendation of the previous inspection was to provide more opportunities for Reception children to initiate their own activities. This has been addressed and Reception children now access stimulating activities, such as solving mathematical problems independently.
- 6.15 All children enjoy their days at the school. They know they are safe and well looked after. The older children understand school routines. The school ensures that everyone involved with the Early Years children has a good understanding of welfare and safeguarding responsibility and procedures, and all requirements are met.
- 6.16 The previous inspection recommended that the school should continue to develop the Nursery's outdoor learning environment, and explore more ways in which Nursery and Reception staff can work together. The Nursery and the Reception classes now have direct access to an exciting and imaginative outdoor area. The management of the EYFS has been re-organised with greater co-operative working between Nursery and Reception.
- 6.17 The outstanding leadership of the Early Years is committed to continuous evaluation of the provision.