



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

CHANNING SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Channing School

Full Name of School	Channing School		
DfE Number	309/6000		
Registered Charity Number	312766		
Address	Channing School The Bank Highgate London London N6 5HF		
Telephone Number	020 8340 2328		
Fax Number	020 8341 5698		
Email Address	info@channing.co.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs B Elliott		
Chair of Governors	Mrs C Leslie		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	787		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 199
	3-5 (EYFS):	39	11-18: 549
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	787	
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection Dates	24 to 27 Mar 2015		

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 March 2009.

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. 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 governors and parents, 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

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Caroline Ansell	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, GSA school)
Mrs Ann Aughwane	Team Inspector (Former Head, GSA school)
Mr Adrian Aylward	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr Robin Badham-Thornhill	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Batchelor	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, ISA school)
Mrs Zelma Braganza	Team Inspector (Former Head, GSA school)
Mr Adrian Lowe-Wheeler	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Balding	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Channing School was established in 1885 in accordance with the Unitarian ideals of its founders as an independent day school for girls. It educates pupils between the ages of four and eighteen. The school occupies two sites on either side of Highgate Hill, North London.
- 1.2 The board of governors maintains the school's distinctive ethos of fostering respect for the whole range of human faiths and beliefs, following the ideals of inclusion and tolerance promoted by the school's founders.
- 1.3 The school's strategic aims are: to provide inspirational teaching across a broad and intellectually stimulating curriculum; to offer excellent pastoral care in a school that is safe, healthy, secure and environmentally aware; to raise the profile of the school as a centre of academic excellence, intellectual enjoyment and outstanding pastoral care; and to offer all pupils the opportunity to explore and to develop their talents beyond the academic curriculum through the provision of an outstanding extra curricular programme. The aims of the school have been encapsulated by the pupils of the school within the Channing Promise which sets down the expectations that they have for themselves, emphasising qualities such as kindness, respect for others, empathy and endeavour.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection in 2009, building developments have included, for the senior school: new laboratories, an extension to the dining room, additional classrooms, a music school, a sixth-form centre; and, for the junior school, additional classrooms and a new entrance area. A new sports hall is now close to completion with plans approved for a performing arts building. The leadership and management has been restructured to reflect the growth and development of the school.
- 1.5 The senior school has 549 pupils aged 11 to 18 with 124 pupils in the sixth form. The junior school has 238 full-time pupils aged from 4 to 11. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has 39 children above the age of 3 and is located in separate accommodation within the junior school buildings. Pupils typically come from various boroughs in north London, and their ethnicity reflects the wide range of the area.
- 1.6 The ability of pupils throughout the school is above the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), although a very small number come from families where English is spoken alongside another language. Thirty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); two of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.7 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 and learning is exceptional. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are extremely successful in their learning and personal development. The school fully meets its strategic aims to provide an intellectually stimulating education in an environment which is supportive, safe, healthy and secure. The school has responded positively to the recommendations of the previous inspection to provide greater challenges for more able pupils, to develop greater consistency in marking and further to share ideas for more effective teaching and learning amongst the staff. The school has also met the recommendation that the detail in outdoor planning reflects all that takes place. Pupils, including those who are more able and those with SEND, make excellent progress, although on isolated occasions, suitably structured tasks for individuals with SEND are not always to hand. There is a palpable eagerness to learn and the school enjoys great success both academically and through activities. Excellent curricular and extra-curricular provision provides a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to flourish both in and beyond the classroom. Pupils are strongly supported by the excellent quality of teaching throughout the school.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The founding Unitarian principles of inclusion and tolerance are embedded within the life of and embraced by the school community. The Channing Promise sets down the expectations that the pupils have for themselves with valued qualities such as kindness, respect for others, empathy and endeavour. Service to others, whether in leadership or mentoring roles or through charitable works, permeates the daily life of the school. The junior and senior school councils provide extremely effective vehicles for the pupil views to be heard. The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent. Standards of behaviour are exemplary. The anti-bullying policy, which encompasses cyber-bullying, is effective, with incidents of bullying seen to be rare. The contribution of the arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent. Through their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, parents demonstrated overwhelming support for the school's approach to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. Pupils reported in their pre-inspection questionnaires and interviews that they felt safe and happy.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are excellent. Governors understand their collective legal responsibilities and discharge these effectively. A strategic plan embraces key educational objectives and communicates a clear vision for the future development of the school. Since the previous inspection, the governors, working closely with leaders and managers, have embarked upon a building and refurbishment programme including a new sixth-form centre and sports hall. Liaison between the leadership and management of the different parts of the school is most effective and consequently not only does the school community share a single vision but also the transitions for pupils between each of the stages of their education are smooth. 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. Parents also expressed great satisfaction with the frequency and character of information provided about the school, its events and activities and their own 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) Recommendation for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Continue to enhance the support given to pupils with SEND by identifying more frequently specific actions which might be taken within individual lessons.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 The school fulfils its aim to be a centre of academic excellence and intellectual enjoyment which allows all pupils at every stage of their educational experience from EYFS to the sixth form the opportunity to explore and to develop their talents within and beyond the academic curriculum.
- 3.3 The overall quality and standards of achievements in the EYFS are exceptional. Profile scores moderated by the local authority show that the children exceed the age-related expected level of development by the end of Reception and are fully prepared for the next stage of their education. All children deal confidently with numbers up to 20 with many going well beyond. Competent measuring and comparisons of length, capacity and weight show that considerable high quality learning is taking place. They use the sounds that letters make to construct words for reading and writing; many are reading at a level above their chronological age. Their physical development is enhanced by the weekly physical education (PE) lessons and full use of the school grounds. Their substantial creative development can be seen by the imaginative paintings and models displayed in the classroom and the benefits accruing from their specialist music lessons as they sing rhythmically in tune. They are independent and confident in their environment, and their social skills increase as they make friends and learn the value of teamwork.
- 3.4 Pupils in the junior school are highly articulate, thoughtful and insightful, showing exceptional levels of knowledge, understanding and skill in all that they do. They love to express their opinions with eloquence and élan on paper and orally, showing a great sense of enjoyment in doing so. Extremely high levels of literacy are shown in all age groups and pupils write intelligently and discussed issues with confidence. The pupils demonstrate advanced applications of mathematical, logical and computing skills. High levels of creative skill are evident. Their workload is managed effectively and efficiently and their work is always well presented. There is considerable individual success, for example: for winning the International Dylan Thomas Poetry Competition in the age 7 to 11 category and achieving a Bronze medal in the national Primary Mathematics Challenge.
- 3.5 In senior school, pupils are exceptionally confident, articulate and intellectually mature in their outlook. They use correct technical terminology in subjects such as mathematics, science and economics and employ sophisticated subject-appropriate language in discussions. Their collaborative work is conducted most effectively in an atmosphere of mutual encouragement and respect. Pupils demonstrate exceptional confidence in their use of information and communication technology (ICT): individual tablet devices are used extensively and effectively, exploiting the opportunities so given for teamwork. Their willingness to take risks reflects the exceptionally positive learning culture within the school and is a contributory factor in the high standards realised across all aspects of their academic endeavour. Pupils' intellectual curiosity and independent learning skills are evident in the high level of achievement seen in the Extended Project Qualifications and coursework assignments.
- 3.6 Pupils achieve outstanding success in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The achievements of junior school pupils in music, art and drama are especially

strong, shown not only by examples of individual success but activities observed and work displayed. Pupils from the junior school play in the National Children's Orchestra and many others gain excellent results in instrumental examinations. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 took part in an ambitious production of *Alice in Wonderland*, and there has been national representation in the under-11 World Chess Championships. In sport, participation is encouraged for all, with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 gaining individual success in various regional and national tennis, swimming and cross-country competitions.

- 3.7 Extra-curricular achievement in the senior school is excellent and often exceptional. The school's Young Enterprise company has achieved regional recognition. Two students have reached the national final of the 'Step into the NHS' competition with their film on midwifery. Many pupils progress to Silver and Gold levels of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils have achieved regional and national representation in athletics, fencing and swimming and they have gained coveted places in the National Youth Orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra. *Chacapella* – an ensemble of pupils – sang at the Edinburgh Festival. A large number of pupils achieves success in instrumental examinations with many achieving distinctions. Eleven pupils entered a prestigious national art competition with one pupil winning second prize, while another won a major prize in a national zoological photography competition. Although pupils achieve a great deal of sporting success, with the recent development of additional facilities for sport within the school, there is scope further to extend opportunities for pupils to pursue sport at a high level and thus harness more completely the enthusiasms shown by pupils.
- 3.8 The pupils' attainment in the junior school cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but standardised test results indicate that it is excellent. This level of attainment, together with the evidence from lesson observation, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work and the school's own data, shows that pupils make excellent progress in relation to their starting points.
- 3.9 For the senior school, 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 currently available. Results in standardised tests of attainment in the junior school indicate that pupils' performance in English and mathematics is higher than national norms. At GCSE level, results are well above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above that for girls in maintained selective schools. The IGCSE results are higher than worldwide averages, and also above than UK averages. The A-level results are exceptional in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above that for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in 2013 were well above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. In 2014 there were further improvements in public examination results. The level of attainment in GCSE and A level, together with standardised measures of progress that are available, indicate that pupils make progress in the senior school and sixth form that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.10 At all levels of the school, pupils identified as having SEND make excellent progress because of the support that they receive and the care taken to match work to their needs. The provision set out in statements of special educational need is met. Able pupils, together with those identified by the school as having particular gifts and talents, receive support and encouragement to enable them to reach very high levels of attainment. Their progress is excellent. In the pre-inspection questionnaire

almost all pupils and parents were pleased with the progress made and with the individual help given to able pupils and those requiring support.

- 3.11 Nearly all sixth-form leavers gain places on competitive higher education courses. The school has an excellent record of applications to universities in the UK and overseas, including many with highly demanding entrance requirements, whilst several pupils secure places each year on art foundation or drama courses.
- 3.12 Pupils throughout the school, including children in the EYFS, demonstrate outstanding attitudes to learning. Mutual support and respect within a collaborative environment is a hallmark of learning within the school, as pupils proudly celebrate the everyday as well as major successes of their peers. At every stage of their education pupils demonstrate the highest aspirations and an extremely positive work ethic: the school is definitely a place where it is 'cool' to work.

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

- 3.13 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.14 The high standards of provision from the EYFS onwards fully support the aim of the school to make available to all pupils a broad and intellectually stimulating curriculum. The well-planned curriculum is broad and highly effective in its coverage of scientific, linguistic, mathematical, practical, cultural, physical and creative areas of study. 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 high levels of satisfaction with the extra-curricular opportunities available to them throughout the school.
- 3.15 Curricular provision for the EYFS setting covers the required seven areas of learning allowing all children to achieve high levels of development for each of these. The bright well-equipped classrooms enable all children to develop their imaginative powers through a wide range of well-structured learning experiences including role-play. All children in the EYFS have access to a specially designed adventure playground with a surface that allows them to explore physical risks in safety, thereby encouraging the development of motor and physical skills. The ready availability of computer technology encourages children effectively, safely and imaginatively to develop ICT skills, for example by creating digital pictures representing the season Spring.
- 3.16 In the junior school the curriculum provides an excellent balance of enriching learning activities, all of which encourage pupils confidently to develop their thinking and imaginative skills. The development of analytical, creative, linguistic and mathematical skills is supplemented positively by the availability of specialist teaching in art, design technology, music, PE, drama, French and Spanish. High levels of digital literacy are promoted by the availability of tablet and other computing technology, so that learning using ICT is embedded most effectively in all subjects.
- 3.17 In the senior school the curriculum has been comprehensively reviewed since the previous inspection. In Years 7 and 8 philosophy has been introduced and the Project Qualification is available in from Year 8 onwards. International GCSEs have been introduced in a number of subjects, including modern foreign languages, in order to provide for pupils more serious challenges and better preparation for advanced studies. Provision has been made for additional after-hours GCSEs in religious education and classical Greek. There is an extensive range of subjects in

the sixth form and generous staffing provision enables pupils to take any combination of available subjects. The careers programme prepares pupils effectively for further education and the world of work.

- 3.18 The wide-ranging PSHE curriculum in the junior and senior schools provides an excellent basis for the pupils' personal development and promotes an understanding of British values and institutions. The programme is highly effective throughout the school and contributes greatly to the personality and character of the pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed engaging in an in-depth discussion on manipulation of the media. Other subjects too, including religious education in the senior school, provide opportunities for focused study of issues which face modern Britain, such as attitudes towards the wide range of cultures in the UK.
- 3.19 The curriculum is eminently suitable for all ages, aptitudes and needs including for those with SEND and the more able. The curriculum supports pupils with SEND effectively both within lessons and through the provision of specialist support. Responding to a recommendation of the previous inspection, the more able are further challenged for example by specialist teaching in the junior school and through the opportunities for independent learning provided by Extended Project Qualifications in the senior school.
- 3.20 The extra-curricular provision for all ages is excellent and fully achieves the school's aim to offer all pupils the opportunity to explore and to develop their talents beyond the academic curriculum through the provision of an outstanding extra curricular programme. This provision includes an impressive choice of clubs, activities and residential and non-residential trips. For example, children are encouraged to grow flowers and vegetables and to visit to the sensory garden, providing children with excellent introductions to the natural world. In the junior school, clubs and activities include embroidery, yoga, tennis, ballet and cross-country, with senior pupils sometimes supporting the junior pupils in these activities. The provision for music is given a high priority: over two-thirds of junior pupils learn instruments and then go on to take part in the wide range of senior school ensembles, orchestras and choirs. An impressive range of senior school clubs and activities include the debating club and the many musical groups. Recent expeditions include a music trip to Boston, a classics trip to Greece and a geography trip to Iceland. There are strong links with the local community, including senior school parents singing in the Channing Community Choir.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.21 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.22 The teaching achieves the aims of the school to provide inspirational guidance to pupils and to expect the best from pupils. Throughout the school, including the EYFS, lessons are well planned and taught at a very good pace, which enables pupils to make rapid progress and develop an impressive understanding of the subject. The teaching engenders within the classroom an atmosphere of eagerness to learn and hard work. There is a manifest enjoyment of learning. Teachers and pupils share a strong mutual respect.
- 3.23 The excellent academic progress made by children in the EYFS is evidence of effective learning as a result of inspired teaching and the high expectations of the enthusiastic staff. Regular and careful observations, together with the new tracking system, enable individual profiles to be produced electronically. These inform

parents about each child's progress and also help staff plan the next steps in learning. The school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection that there should be greater attention to the detail of planning for outdoor EYFS activities.

- 3.24 In the junior school, lessons promote a tangible excitement to learn. Teachers engage with motivated learners and combine challenge and enjoyment. Pupils benefit from a range of highly successful teaching styles. Clear and purposeful questioning galvanises the pupils to engage in high-level thinking. The teaching encourages pupils with vibrant and profound displays such as those in the junior school on the second world war. Pupils are encouraged to work both collaboratively and independently to great effect.
- 3.25 In the senior school, the teaching is inspirational, characterised by excellent subject knowledge, imaginative planning and in-depth understanding of the pupils' needs. Teaching in the sixth form is of a very high standard with an overarching commitment to the needs of each pupil: there is an evident desire to teach beyond the constraints of examination requirements.
- 3.26 The previous inspection recommended that the teaching should set greater challenges for the more able pupils. This has been achieved, assisted in part by the weekly junior 'spotlight on teaching and learning' presentations and fortnightly senior briefings during which staff share their ideas on how all pupils might learn more effectively. In the pre-inspection responses, a small minority of pupils felt that the volume of work expected of them was too great. Inspectors judge that the volume and challenge of the work set in lessons is planned appropriately for all abilities and needs, including those pupils with SEND. Parents expressed considerable satisfaction with the help given to the more able and to those with SEND. The great majority of lessons successfully incorporate extension work to challenge the more able and to support those with SEND. In a very few lessons, individuals with SEND sometimes make less rapid progress because suitably structured tasks are not always at hand.
- 3.27 The teaching is supported well by a wide range of excellent resources including interactive whiteboards, tablet devices and well-equipped libraries. Digital technology and the school's virtual learning environment are used to excellent effect enabling the pupils to develop their skills in writing, research and data manipulation in lessons and beyond the classroom.
- 3.28 The recommendation by the previous inspection that teachers should achieve greater consistency in their marking has been met. Throughout the school, marking is highly informative and helpful, enabling the pupils to make rapid progress and teachers to track this improvement. Teachers give clear guidance in lessons and pupils listen attentively. Questions are used effectively to monitor progress in understanding. In the junior school, a thorough system of assessment and tracking enables teachers to plan very well for pupils' needs. In the senior school, standardised data are made available and teachers use the information well. The school is currently seeking ways of improving the tracking and monitoring of pupils who have SEND, to ensure that their needs are always met. The school keeps a regularly updated register of the more able which is put to very effective use in meeting their needs.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is highly successful in providing a clear framework for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the individual. It thereby fulfils the wishes of its founders to foster respect for the whole range of human faiths and beliefs, following the ideals of inclusion and tolerance. Pupils throughout the school have extremely well developed and distinct personalities and demonstrate impressive self-confidence and independence of mind and action. The pupils' commitment to their community is exemplified by and through the Channing Promise. This promise is wholeheartedly embraced throughout the school, with pupils proud of their involvement in this initiative, which brings such valued qualities as kindness and empathy to the forefront of their education at the school. By the time that they leave school, pupils show a high level of personal development.
- 4.3 Spiritual awareness is excellent. Pupils understand clearly the importance of faith in their lives and they openly respect all creeds. In this they draw upon their work in PSHE and religious education. The Unitarian influence of respect and tolerance underpins the spiritual sensibilities of the pupils. They further develop their spiritual awareness through music and reflection as they explore the themes of high-quality assemblies. Drama, music and art also encourage pupils from the EYFS onwards to enhance their aesthetic and spiritual awareness.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral awareness is excellent. From the EYFS onwards, a sense of responsibility and politeness is encouraged. Pupils know right from wrong, they readily accept the codes of conduct and their behaviour is exemplary. The pupils demonstrate their concern for those less fortunate than themselves by the school's outstanding charity work. In all years pupils' self-esteem is enhanced by the pride they take in their positions of responsibilities. They discuss human rights and moral issues openly and strongly and are aware of and respect the civil and criminal law of England. The pupils demonstrate a high level of care for the environment through such activities as the junior school eco-council. The numerous pupil-led initiatives include many fund-raising events for local and national charities, demonstrating the pupils' moral sense in action.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. The relationships between pupils and staff show high levels of mutual care and respect. In the EYFS, children have very strong social skills, behaving well, talking freely and confidently to each other, staff and visitors. The children clearly respect each other as they offer help, take turns and work industriously, both individually and co-operatively. The junior and senior schools councils are active and include members from each year group. Pupils on the councils are nominated and elected by their peers. Their views are listened to and generally supported by both the pupils and the staff. The sixth formers were consulted about, and have been actively involved in, the design and needs of the new sixth-form centre. All these groups exercise responsibility carefully and respectfully. Links across the year-groups are encouraged, exemplified by the paired reading initiative of pupils in Reception and Year 5 and the involvement of senior pupils with lower years in their service as sports coaches and Latin mentors. This sense of service to others is purposefully developed within the school community and the wider global community via the schools' extensive charity work.

As they move through the school the pupils develop a very good knowledge of the public services and institutions of England.

- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. Their awareness of other cultures, as well as that of the Western tradition, is extremely well developed within a framework that gives suitable emphasis to fundamental British values such as democracy and individual freedom. Pupils benefit from the rich cultural diversity within the school, and they are genuinely interested in and respect each other's way of life and belief. Pupils enrich the cultural heritage of the school in their involvement in the high quality and frequent presentations of musical and dramatic events, and by the numerous clubs and societies and residential visits. Regular assemblies allow pupils time to share their experience of travel and foreign encounters.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Clear pastoral structures and policies ensure that the needs of all pupils are met fully, reflecting the school's Unitarian ethos of respect, tolerance, responsibility and understanding of all faiths. Highly effective communication and regular monitoring ensure early identification of concerns, backed by effective and timely intervention. A counsellor, appointed following suggestions from senior pupils, is available for additional support. The school successfully meets its aim to offer excellent pastoral care in a school that is safe, healthy, secure and environmentally aware.
- 4.9 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is excellent. Children enjoy the nutritious cooked school lunches in the main dining hall. They develop good personal hygiene habits and soon become independent in these. They learn about keeping themselves safe in all areas and the benefits of exercise developing physical skills during timetabled specialist PE sessions; music lessons often include movement to music. A key worker is assigned to every child enabling strong relationships to be established with both child and parents contributing greatly to the child's development and welfare.
- 4.10 Positive and strong relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are evident throughout the school from the EYFS onwards. Pupils praised the support they receive from staff in discussions and through their pre-inspection questionnaires. Pupils in the junior and senior schools are confident that there is an adult or senior pupils to whom they can turn to if they have any concerns. In the senior school, the peer mentor system is effective in strengthening relationships between older and younger pupils. Through the PSHE programme and a variety of activities, effective advice and guidance is provided for the next stage of each pupil's education, including preparation for university. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions, pupils said that they like being at the school. This confirms the views of the overwhelming majority of parents who, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, said that the children feel safe in school and are well looked after and happy.
- 4.11 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying, including cyber-bullying. A very small minority of pupils expressed the view that the school does not deal well with cases of bullying. Inspectors looked at this concern in detail. In interviews, pupils said that bullying is rare and that they are confident it is handled firmly when it occurs. The disciplinary records indicate that the school has implemented its policies and procedures meticulously and that the school takes a

strong stand against all forms of bullying. A small minority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school does not always ask for or respond to their opinions effectively and that the sanctions and rewards the teachers give are not always fair. Logs of sanctions indicate that responses to misdemeanours are typically appropriate and fair. Throughout the school, rewards are frequent and this emphasis is very much valued by the pupils. The school takes many opportunities to seek the views of pupils especially, but not only, through the senior and junior school councils. A number of pupils' suggestions have been implemented including the appointment of a school counsellor, *Meat-free Mondays* and a study area for Year 11. In interviews, pupils said clearly that the school seeks their views and responds well to them.

- 4.12 Pupils are encouraged to make healthy life choices. Initiatives such as Healthy Schools' Week, as well as extra-curricular activities and physical education within the curriculum, ensure that all pupils, including the sixth form, take regular exercise. The PSHE programme, which includes coverage of mental health and physical well-being, also makes a significant and positive contribution. The school provides a wide choice of nutritious food and all pupils are aware of the importance of choosing a healthy diet.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational and physical access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.15 Careful attention is given to the safeguarding of pupils. The school's comprehensive safeguarding policy is implemented effectively by designated senior members of staff in each part of the school. Arrangements have regard to the latest official guidance. When recruiting staff, the school is very thorough in undertaking all the required pre-appointment checks, which are carefully recorded. All members of staff, governors and volunteers receive regular and effective child protection training at the appropriate level, including internet safety awareness. A named governor liaises with senior staff, monitoring safeguarding procedures throughout the school. Records relating to any concerns about pupils' welfare are stored carefully and suitably trained designated members of staff maintain close and appropriate contact with local agencies. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS are extremely well met.
- 4.16 The necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are particularly thorough. Fire risk assessments and training records are up-to-date, fire drills are held regularly at different times of the day and evacuation procedures are clear. The procedures are well known and understood by pupils and staff. Risk assessments associated with the premises and with school trips and activities, are thorough and detailed, identifying the hazards and the controls needed to minimise risk. These risk assessments are regularly monitored and updated. Pupils are supervised carefully as they move between junior and senior school sites. Maintenance of the buildings and sites is very well managed. The health and safety committee meets regularly and its deliberations and recommendations are considered both by the leadership and by governors.
- 4.17 The first-aid policy provides clear guidance for the care and welfare of pupils. The provision for ill and injured pupils and those with SEND is very effective. All staff are

trained in first aid and this training is updated every three years. Those involved in the EYFS have paediatric first aid training. Pupils who may become ill benefit from excellent medical support provided by two qualified nurses who run the medical room in the senior school and who are responsible for the medical facilities for junior school pupils and EYFS children. Accidents, illnesses and provision of medication are recorded carefully on a centralised computer system in an exemplary fashion.

- 4.18 Registration of the pupils takes place in a calm and careful manner with any unexplained absences followed up quickly and effectively. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

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 governors are highly successful in supporting the aims of the school and promoting the strong ethos of inclusion and tolerance which is central to the life of the school. 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, the leadership of the governors has helped to improve the standards of education whilst ensuring that the welfare and well-being of pupils is excellent, including that of children in the EYFS.
- 5.3 The governors have exercised active control of the school's resources. Collectively the governors have a wide range of financial, legal, medical, property, media, human resources, marketing and educational experiences. With a supportive presence, they have an excellent insight into the school, meeting regularly with the senior management and leadership and also with other members of the school community. Various committees monitor the administrative and educational work of the school. Members of staff are invited to contribute to their meetings and report on a range of educational developments.
- 5.4 Through their objectives for the school, the governors' vision for strategic development is strong, with careful financial management embedded within the ethos and educational ambitions of the school. Since the previous inspection, the governors have continued to extend the facilities and resources and supported the appointment of high quality staff. Additional buildings, facilities and resources, including refurbished accommodation for the EYFS, have been provided since the previous inspection. School buildings are maintained effectively and any issues relating to health and safety are dealt with promptly. Governors provide excellent support for the head, both through periodic appraisal and regular contact.
- 5.5 The governors, acting as a corporate body, understand their legal responsibilities to the school and maintain careful oversight of policies and procedures, all of which are reviewed regularly. The welfare, health and safety of pupils are reviewed regularly and detailed procedures are in place for safeguarding. An appointed governor for safeguarding maintains close and regular contact with the school. Another governor has specific oversight of the welfare and education of children in the EYFS and for pupils in the junior school. The full governing body receives and discusses an annual report on the content and implementation of safeguarding arrangements.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in enabling the school to meet its aim to provide an education where all pupils can aspire to academic excellence within a supportive, secure and safe environment. They are likewise successful in creating and sustaining a culture which fosters mutual respect and understanding, true to the school's founding Unitarian tradition. As a result, pupils

feel nurtured and valued: they develop impressive personal qualities and thrive as learners.

- 5.8 Leaders and managers in the EYFS and the senior and junior schools work closely together ensuring that all members of staff share the same vision and the same aspirations for the pupils in their care. A close working partnership between these leaders and managers also ensures smooth transition and continuity for pupils across each of the stages of their education. Leaders work collaboratively with teachers to advance the school's development plan; all members of staff have opportunities to contribute to strategy through open forums and project working parties.
- 5.9 There is a discernible commitment to continuous improvement. The role of middle managers in driving quality has been strengthened. Heads of department and subject co-ordinators undertake purposeful monitoring of colleagues' work through observation and work scrutiny. Pastoral managers also take their responsibilities very seriously and discharge their duties effectively. Regular appraisals are effective in promoting the professional development of staff. Appraisal is seen by staff as motivational and as an opportunity to reflect upon and to celebrate successful professional practice.
- 5.10 Responding to a recommendation of the previous inspection, many opportunities for teachers to share good practice have been woven into the fabric of school life, notably through dedicated teaching and learning briefings in the senior school, 'spotlights on teaching and learning' during staff meetings in the junior school, posts on the virtual learning environment, peer classroom observations and learning walks. Pupils have been inspired by the leadership to take up their own leadership roles within the school, whether as digital leaders, sports coaches and sixth-form officers. An exceptionally high number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with the way in which the school is led and managed.
- 5.11 Welfare, health and safety procedures are efficiently managed. 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. Secure procedures to check suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with children are in place and records are made in the central register.
- 5.12 The quality of links between the school and parents, carers and guardians is excellent. During interviews parents maintained that the school offers 'a journey' to be enjoyed that extends beyond the excellent results achieved by the pupils and they report that the school ethos encourages and enables pupils to become socially aware, community minded and confident. Parents appreciate the many opportunities to come into the school from invitations to events to participating in the school's community choir. The thriving parents' association arranges social events which enhance the sense of inclusion for all parents and strengthen communication between parents and the school. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure and any concerns are dealt with very promptly, effectively and sensitively. In the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all responses were positive and parents overwhelmingly recorded that they would recommend the school to others.
- 5.13 Parents maintained in their pre-inspection questionnaires and in interviews that they are satisfied with the feedback they receive on their daughter's progress and they find parents' evenings very helpful. Reports are detailed and tailored to the

individual, identifying progress made and giving useful advice on next steps. EYFS parents appreciate the daily contact with teachers and teaching assistants as well as the feedback they are given on more formal occasions. The school website is a useful source of practical information and the school magazine is a valued record of the school's activities, highlighting and celebrating considerable pupil endeavour and achievement from the EYFS to the sixth form.

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