



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
THE STEPHEN PERSE FOUNDATION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Stephen Perse Foundation

Full Name of School	The Stephen Perse Foundation		
DfE Number	873/6011		
Registered Charity Number	1120608		
Address	The Stephen Perse Foundation Union Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 1HF		
Telephone Number	01223 454700		
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Email Address	hms@stephenperse.com		
Principal	Miss Patricia M Kelleher		
Chair of Governors	Dr Gillian R Sutherland		
Age Range	3 to 19		
Total Number of Pupils	823		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (66 boys; 757 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	62	5-11: 240
	11-18:	520	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	822	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sarah Holyoake		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	11 Mar 2014 to 14 Mar 2014		

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 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Annabelle Hancock	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Dr Martin Boulton	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mrs Kathryn Burrows	Team Inspector (Head of Juniors, GSA school)
Mrs Linda Glithro	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mrs Kathleen Hayes	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mr Paul Leeming	Team Inspector (Senior Manager, IAPS school)
Mr Jason Lewis	Team Inspector (Senior Manager, HMC school)
Mrs Ruth Mercer	Team Inspector (Head, GSA, HMC school)
Mr Mark Richards	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Roger Shaw	Team Inspector (Senior Master, HMC school)
Mr Stephane Talleux	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, GSA school)
Mr Chris Manville	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Stephen Perse Foundation School was founded in Cambridge in 1881 as Perse School for Girls and today comprises four independent schools. A co-educational pre-prep school on two sites, one located in the centre of Cambridge, called City Pre-Prep, and one in the nearby village of Madingley, educates pupils aged 3 to 6 years. Girls are educated at the Stephen Perse Junior School between 7 to 11 years and in the Stephen Perse Senior School from 11 to 16 years, both located in the centre of Cambridge. The nearby Stephen Perse Sixth Form College is co-educational for pupils aged 16 to 19 years. In May 2013, the Foundation announced plans to move towards a diamond formation of education with boys entering Year 3 for the first time in September 2014 and Year 7 and Year 9 in September 2018. The Foundation aims to foster a love of learning and to develop inquiring, reflective and open minded young people, prepared for the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century and equipped to play an active role in an increasingly international world.
- 1.2 Pupils travel to the schools from a wide geographical area around and beyond Cambridge. They enter the senior school from a large number of maintained and independent primary schools. There is an increasing intake of pupils from other schools into the sixth form including a few from overseas who live with guardians. Pupils come from a very broad range of socio-economic, cultural and academic backgrounds. The school educates 105 pupils in the pre-prep schools, 62 girls and 43 boys. There are 139 girls in the junior school and 432 in the senior. The sixth form college became co-educational in September 2010 and educates 123 girls and 23 boys. The school has identified 49 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 41 receive learning support. There are 13 pupils receiving support for English as an Additional Language (EAL). Standardised national assessment tests show that the average ability of pupils at all stages in the school is above the national average. Most pupils are of at least above average ability with very few having ability that is below average. In the senior school and in the sixth form college there is a notable proportion having ability that is well above average.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in 2008 the Foundation has made considerable additions to the school. In 2010 they acquired the Madingley Pre-Prep School and in 2012 opened the City Pre-Prep School within the junior school buildings. In 2008 the Stephen Perse Sixth Form College was opened and the previous sixth-form area was converted into a visual arts centre. New libraries have been provided in the junior and senior school and additional departmental areas created including new information communication technology (ICT) facilities.
- 1.4 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' achievement and learning are exceptional. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, pupils of all abilities and needs are highly successful in their learning and personal development. The school fully meets its aim to provide a dynamic and exciting learning environment which allows pupils to excel and prepare for their place in an increasingly international world. Pupils consistently achieve at levels beyond those expected for their age in their academic studies, their learning skills and in their participation in the many activities beyond the classroom. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make high levels of progress in response to an innovative curriculum that encourages diversity and individuality. The excellent teaching, using a wide variety of teaching methods combined with the extensive use of digital technology, fosters an enquiring and creative learning environment in which pupils thrive. The high expectations and strong work ethic of both pupils and teachers are major factors in their exceptional achievement.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. The emphasis placed on the individual ensures that all feel valued as members of this caring community. The pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown in their appreciation and respect for one another, the school and the inequalities in the world. Their high levels of maturity and confidence and strong sense of fair play and justice reflect the ethos promoted by the school. The pupils are supported by excellent pastoral care and clear arrangements to ensure their welfare, health and safety. Those pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were mostly positive about the school.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are of an excellent quality. The exceptional educational experience provided is a result of a strong shared vision of what the future might hold for the young people of today and the education needed to support this. The governors discharge their responsibilities fully and have the expertise and skill to plan successfully for the school's future. The provision of high quality staff, buildings and resources especially the move to providing a digital learning world, underpins the exceptional achievements and excellent personal development of the pupils. Management at all levels, including in the EYFS, is a strength of the school and is characterised by commitment, strong team work and dedication to planning and self-evaluation. The school has strong links with parents and excellent methods of communication. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires show that parents are very pleased with the education and support provided by the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement.

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Develop an evidence base for every pupil to ensure their many achievements throughout their time in school are fully recorded and monitored.

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 is exceptional.
- 3.2 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim to help its pupils achieve outstanding results in public examinations and excellence in a variety of sporting, performance, service and other extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children make good and often excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities, and achieve the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. They draw upon past experiences in their play, using imaginative and descriptive language to re-tell familiar stories in original ways, and expressing their ideas through a range of media, including digital technology, art and role play. In nursery, children begin to write familiar words with increasing accuracy. They count confidently in a range of situations, accurately matching numerals and quantities up to ten. In reception, they decode more complex words and describe the features of a range of regular 2D and 3D shapes. They make predictions, test hypotheses and are creative problem solvers, for example, when finding the best material for waterproof clothing. Children are very confident and highly proficient in the use of ICT, which they often incorporate seamlessly into their self-initiated activities to extend and develop their ideas.
- 3.4 In the junior school and in the pre-prep schools many pupils display high levels of thinking, speaking and listening skills. Pupils are extremely articulate as seen in outstanding drama sessions. They are highly motivated and often initiate their own research topics. In Year 1 pupils plan part of their own curriculum. They produce mature pieces of extended writing from an early age and can argue cogently both orally and in discursive writing, for example, "Was Boudicca right to rebel against the Romans?" In a Year 6 assembly during Cambridge Science week pupils produced lively oral presentations demonstrating thorough understanding of the science topic and exceptional ability in the use of technology by using video to great effect.
- 3.5 Pupils in the senior school and the sixth form excel at developing the ability to think creatively and logically and produce high quality written and oral work. Pupils' aptitude in the application of mathematics is exceptional and many have high levels of scientific understanding. They can think for themselves and the teaching of theory of knowledge in the sixth form provides a forum for students to articulate and express their exceptional knowledge from different areas of the curriculum with confidence. Pupils across the school, but especially in the sixth-form produce individual works of art of exceptional quality. Across the whole school their understanding and application of ICT is exceptional.
- 3.6 Pupils also achieve highly in their extra-curricular activities. In the junior school pupils have gained high levels of success in writing, science, general knowledge, design, ballet and music examinations and competitions. Recent successes in the senior school and sixth form include gold and silver medals in mathematics and science Olympiads, success at county and national level in many sports and accolades in music that range from national singing competitions to representation in the National Youth Orchestra and National Youth Choir. At present the many achievements of the pupils are not centrally recorded on a comprehensive pupil profile to remind pupils of their many exceptional achievements as they move through the schools.

- 3.7 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE results have been exceptional in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. On average, over the three years, almost 95 per cent of all grades have been at A* or A. In 2013 the same high level of achievement was attained and 63 per cent of Year 11 pupils achieved 9 or more A* grades. Results in IGCSE subjects are higher than worldwide and UK norms.
- 3.8 A-level results have been exceptional in relation to the national average for maintained schools and well above the national average for maintained selective schools. On average 93 per cent of all grades are achieved at grades A* to B with boys achieving slightly higher than girls. Results in 2013 were achieved at the same high standard as previous years. IB results have been exceptional in relation to the worldwide average, and well above the UK average. The average point score of 39.28 for the three years was improved upon in 2013 to an average point score of 42.2 being the highest average point score in the UK and the joint highest in the world.
- 3.9 Nationally standardised progress data in the junior school indicates that pupils make progress that is at least good, and potentially high in some cohorts. In lessons an excellent rate of progress was observed. The level of attainment at GCSE and A level, and the nationally standardised progress data that is available, indicates that pupils make a high rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. These results, considered alongside the pupils' work and achievement in lessons and activities, indicate that this level of progress is consistent across all year groups and abilities. Analysis of achievement shows that pupils with SEND and EAL make excellent progress across all ages, including the EYFS. This reflects the high quality support offered by teachers who know their pupils well. Pupils who are designated as most able also demonstrate high levels of progress because they are challenged by extension and enrichment activities such as the Mandarin and Latin clubs in the junior school; the 'thinking aloud' discussion forum in the senior school and 'Mock Trials' in the sixth form. The majority of Year 13 pupils go on to their first choice of university in the UK and a few students enter universities across the world.
- 3.10 Pupils have a positive attitude to their work at all stages. In the EYFS children are enthusiastic and highly motivated by the supportive and knowledgeable staff and by imaginative resources. In the pre-prep and junior school pupils display a love of learning and are passionate about sharing their learning and their ideas. In the senior school and sixth form they have an exceptionally strong work ethic, are confident in their ability and are ambitious for themselves. Pupils throughout the school are highly motivated, enthusiastic and active learners whether working independently or collaboratively.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.12 The school successfully meets its aim to provide a curriculum which celebrates individuality and diversity. The innovative curriculum model ensures a continuity of vision between the schools in the Foundation and ensures pupils at all ages have access to a broad and challenging curriculum appropriate for their needs and ability. Throughout the school the curriculum wheel is displayed, emphasizing the importance of the main areas of learning combined with the development of

character, thinking and the global outlook the school strives for in all areas of learning. The excellence of the curriculum is a significant feature in the exceptional achievements of the pupils.

- 3.13 The move towards digital learning, allowing pupils to use emerging technologies effectively, is central to the Foundation's vision. The Foundation has provided access to digital technology for all pupils from the youngest to the oldest through tablet computers that act as a portal for learning and communication. The development of technology fits well with the global ethos the school is keen to promote.
- 3.14 In the EYFS the setting is excellent in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Imaginative, richly resourced classrooms and outdoor areas, provide a wealth of opportunities for children to explore, create and discover through an excellent balance of adult-initiated and self-directed activities, providing comprehensive coverage of all areas of the EYFS curriculum.
- 3.15 In the junior and pre-prep schools the curriculum has been developed in order to create a community of enquirers. The youngest pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to develop skills as part of discussion. The speaking and listening skills which they develop have a big impact on their other learning. Classroom practice is a collaboration between pupil and teacher, pupil-led where practicable, and thinking skills are cleverly embedded into the curriculum. Only in maths in Year 6 are pupils allocated to ability groups. Many lessons are class taught while specialist teachers are involved in the teaching in the junior school for science, modern languages, music, physical education (PE) and creative subjects. Integrated learning themes are used to teach history and geography alongside other subjects whenever possible. ICT skills are learned as a discrete subject in Year 3 then successfully embedded across the curriculum using tablet computers and laptops. Issues of common interest and citizenship are discussed in a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and pupils enjoy studying whole school topics on trips or by listening to visiting speakers. Thinking skills are developed in a dedicated lesson each week at all ages. The school is well resourced and pupils' learning experiences are enhanced by superb displays and imaginative interior design, for example in the new fiction library and story-telling courtyard in the junior school.
- 3.16 In the senior school and sixth form, curriculum breadth is valued and pupils are encouraged to include a humanities subject and a creative subject in their GCSE/IGCSE options. All pupils take a non-examined course in critical thinking which equips them to think logically and understand ethics. The 'global outlook' course in Year 8 helps pupils to understand their place in the world and the cultural traditions and influences of other countries. In the sixth form, pupils are given the choice of studying A levels or the IB and although most choose to take A levels, many features of the IB such as breadth and the international dimension, permeate into all aspects of the school curriculum. Sixth-form pupils benefit from the IB theory of knowledge course during Year 12 which develops their critical thinking skills and helps prepare them for university entrance. ICT is taught discretely in Year 7 but thereafter is successfully integrated throughout the whole curriculum.
- 3.17 PSHE and careers guidance are successfully delivered through a series of day and half-day events complemented by form-time and assemblies. Pupils learn to understand the skills needed for the world of work from Year 9 when they begin to engage in the out-reach programme in the community. Support for children with

SEND and EAL is excellent. In the EYFS all children reach and often exceed the expected levels for their age because of the excellent support they receive. Throughout the school the work of specialist SEND teachers continues to be developed in the classroom. There is a wide range of extension activities available to stretch the most able from lunchtime clubs including various academic societies, to Olympiads.

- 3.18 Curricular provision throughout the school is supported and enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities including trips, visits and external speakers. In the junior and pre-prep many activities enhance and enrich the timetabled curriculum including Scottish dancing, chess and judo. In the senior school and sixth form college a wide range of clubs compete for pupils' time during lunchtimes and after school. There is a wide provision to allow pupils to be engaged in music including a large concert orchestra and a number of choirs. There are also many opportunities for pupils to take part in school drama productions whether acting or providing technical support. Sporting activities for team participation or for fun are encouraged. Intellectual development is promoted through many pupil-led activities, for example, the 'Peligraph' magazine and 'Peliblog' which is written by the sixth form. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) is popular, as are the adventurous activities offered by the exploration society such as sailing on the Norfolk Broads. The school's 'Step Out' programme offers many opportunities for pupils to be involved in outreach work, especially through links with a number of local primary schools. Pupils speak warmly about the personal skills they gain through such links.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching.

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, the high quality of teaching is very effective in supporting pupils' progress and in promoting the foundation's core value of excellence and creativity in teaching and learning.
- 3.21 In the EYFS adults have a comprehensive knowledge of how children learn. Well-planned, engaging and active teaching motivates participation and captures the children's imagination, drawing out original ideas. Learning habits such as resilience, collaboration and curiosity are skilfully incorporated into all activities, equipping children for problem solving, stimulating creativity and critical thinking, and preparing children exceptionally well for the next stage in their learning. The use of tablet computers to enhance teaching and learning is outstanding.
- 3.22 Throughout the pre-prep and junior school effective learning habits are taught to the children, through thinking skills lessons and, from Year 2, philosophy for children. The learning attributes are displayed in the classroom and are wholly embedded in the excellent and imaginative skills-based planning, which is underpinned by the curriculum wheel. A variety of teaching methods is used to deliver an exciting range of topics, encouraging independence of mind and excellent collaborative working. Pupils as young as those in the pre-prep are able to plan and execute their own work as demonstrated in their 'Plan, Do, Review' activities. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise are high. The large majority of lessons observed were fast paced and stimulating, enabling pupils to make very good progress. Learning is fun and laughter is often heard in the classrooms. The rapport between pupils and teachers is excellent, resulting in behaviour of a very high standard.

- 3.23 Teaching in the senior school stimulates pupils' interest and enables outstanding progress in knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers are aware of the pupils' individual needs, strengths and weaknesses. They are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and the positive relationships between teachers and pupils is a particularly strong feature. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the time generously given to support and challenge them. This encourages good behaviour and ensures that the majority of teachers and pupils feel confident to take risks with the learning within and outside the lessons. Effective and skilful questioning challenges pupils further and stimulates higher order thinking skills. Almost all lessons are very well planned and structured.
- 3.24 There has been a major drive in the school to engage with new information technology to support teaching and learning. As a result, digital devices are used naturally and intuitively inside and outside the classroom, simply as another effective learning tool. Much of the teaching uses a wide variety of imaginative teaching methods and creative resources to foster interest and support rapid progress, moving seamlessly between the newly introduced tablet computers to more traditional resources. The imaginative use of ICT greatly enhances the pupils' learning experience and enjoyment. For example, the dynamic use of interactive white boards onto which pupils can share their work from their computer tablet, makes lessons truly interactive. Enthusiasm for, and expectation of high levels of achievement are the hallmark of these stimulating lessons, which offer ample opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves. Topics are introduced in a manner that allows pupils to engage fully with the material through excellent collaborative work in pairs and small groups and they are encouraged to express their own ideas to foster independent thinking. Pupils with SEND or EAL are enabled to feel comfortable working within the same parameters as their peers and the majority of lessons include sufficient challenge for the most able.
- 3.25 Since the previous inspection a revised marking policy has been developed across all of the schools and examples of exemplary written marking were observed. However, there are inconsistencies of implementation across year groups and subjects, so that pupils are not always clear about the steps required to improve. Effective and constructive oral feedback to aid progress was observed during the inspection. In response to the findings of the previous inspection the school now effectively uses a detailed collection of academic data to identify and respond to pupils' learning needs and measure their progress.
- 3.26 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a few pupils indicated concerns about the value of homework. Inspectors found that in interviews, junior school pupils were extremely enthusiastic about homework and the contribution it makes to their learning and the senior school pupils reported that they were satisfied with the level of homework given.

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 By the time the pupils leave the school they have an excellent standard of personal development in accordance with the school's aims of developing inquiring, reflective, open-minded and confident young people, who are well prepared for the next stage of their life.
- 4.3 The spiritual awareness of pupils is strong. Throughout all ages, including the EYFS, the emphasis placed on the individual as a member of a vibrant learning community ensures that they have high self-esteem and a vital sense of belonging. Pupils in the junior and pre-prep schools have an excellent appreciation of the spiritual development and traditions of major world faiths. During assemblies, philosophy for children, PSHE and thinking skills lessons, pupils benefit from space to think and to develop a mature set of values, principles and beliefs which inform their perspective on life and behaviour. This is further developed in Year 6 as pupils reflect on their meaning and purpose in life. In the senior school and sixth form they display high levels of maturity and confidence and are not afraid to display their individuality. Through discussion and debating in forums such as 'thinking aloud' and critical thinking pupils are able to explore their imagination and creativity, whilst appreciating the view-points of others. Their sense of spirituality is heightened by public performances in awe inspiring settings. The positive relationships between all members of the school community create an atmosphere where pupils are sensitive to the feelings of others and feel their own values are respected.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. The younger pupils demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong as seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils clearly understood why graffiti and vandalism are unacceptable. Children in the EYFS respond quickly to instructions, are co-operative, considerate and collaborate extremely well. During pupil interviews in the junior school all expressed a keen sense of natural justice and a mature understanding of the importance of thinking before speaking or acting inappropriately. They discussed the school's code of conduct and sanctions system with strong moral awareness and a desire for fair play. Pupils demonstrate a high level of care for the environment through bodies such as the 'eco-committee.' Senior pupils respond seriously to moral and world issues with charity fund-raising and thoughtful assemblies. They are often passionate and articulate advocates of a cause and develop a strong sense of natural justice and fair play. Numerous pupil-led initiatives in programmes such as 'Step In and Step Out' have displayed pupils' moral sense in action. They are well behaved around school, and are polite and courteous.
- 4.5 Throughout the school pupils have excellent social awareness. The relationships between pupils and staff show exceptionally high levels of mutual care and respect. In the EYFS, shared activities and weekly certificate assemblies, prepare children extremely well for the transition to the next stage of their education. Throughout the school the house system encourages a sense of loyalty and pride. Those who hold posts of responsibility such as form leaders, school council members, and committee representatives in Year 11 and the sixth form are very conscientious and proud of their role in the smooth running of the school. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school and display their social confidence when hosting school events. Pupils are deeply committed to helping others, for example, the very

successful 'buddy' system helps to integrate new pupils into the school community. They exhibit an appreciation of public service when they participate in a variety of charitable events supporting people in the local community and in Zambia. Pupils' understanding of citizenship, British institutions and how communities operate effectively is significantly enhanced by participation in a community challenge programme and by visits to the school by the mayor, police and other public services.

- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent cultural understanding. They show sensitive respect for those of other faiths and have positive relationships with those from families of other cultures. Their understanding of their own culture and other nationalities is fostered through the global outlook of the curriculum, musical events and educational visits, for example to churches, cathedrals, museums and the theatre. Pupils' studies of life in other countries such as India enable them to develop social, political and economic awareness and trips both in the UK and to many countries overseas, increase their appreciation of the variation within the world in which they live. Cultural awareness is further developed by an extensive programme of drama productions and music recitals and concerts in major performing venues in the local community and overseas. This cultural diversity helps to make the school a rich and fulfilling environment for its pupils. By the time pupils leave the school they have a true sense of themselves as part of a community with a respected heritage but an excellent understanding of the world outside of school.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The excellent care provided is in accordance with the school's aims to provide a happy, secure, structured and supportive environment. Pastoral care is exceptionally well managed at all levels and parents and pupils in their questionnaires reported how much they valued the care given by all staff.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent. Teachers know their pupils well and are dedicated to their welfare, providing an inclusive and highly supportive structure for them to progress in their learning. Comprehensive pastoral policies and procedures are clear and behaviour is well managed. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires a small minority of pupils indicated that they felt teachers were not fair in the way they awarded rewards and sanctions. In interviews pupils felt that they understood the need for sanctions, but reported they were very rarely given, and most pupils felt staff recognised their efforts frequently by the use of praise and other rewards available to them.
- 4.10 In the EYFS high expectations, well-rehearsed behaviour management strategies, and posters illustrating classroom behaviour rules help to maintain a focused, industrious atmosphere where children feel able to explore, create and engage with others. In the junior school and pre-prep a framework of key teachers including the form tutor, head of year and head of house provide excellent support for the pupils. Junior pupils are guided by a school code of conduct and a classroom charter that promotes respect and good behaviour. A meet and greet policy in the pre-prep fosters a caring relationship between parents, staff and pupils. The pre-prep pupils have buddies for support and the Year 6 playground leaders assist during pre-prep break times on the city site. In the senior school and sixth form college pastoral care is well managed by all staff but specifically by tutors, heads of year and members of

the senior management team. Across the school, pupils declare that they enjoy their time at school and know precisely from whom to seek support and assistance. Although in the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of pupils reported that they did not know who they would turn to with a concern, this was not the opinion of those who were interviewed and they were able to name many members of staff from across the school.

- 4.11 The Foundation has a policy that positively guards against harassment and bullying. All pupils are confident that any instances of unpleasantness are dealt with promptly and constructively. In pupil interviews they reported that incidents of bullying are rare but are handled quickly by staff if they do occur. The comprehensive PSHE programme is a strength throughout the school with guidance given on e-safety, mental health issues and resilience training amongst other positive and practical support and advice provided both to pupils and their parents. The school closely monitors and evaluates the use of technology in the pupils' social time in the senior school.
- 4.12 Throughout the school the pupils are keen to be engaged in the decision-making process and many make use of the creative and stimulating opportunities for personal growth. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of pupils stated that the school does not seek their opinions and respond to them. The inspection team found throughout all age groups the pupils were very pro-active in the running of their school. The junior school form leaders take ideas and suggestions to school council and pre-prep pupils assist in the planning of their work. In the senior school pupils are consulted on their views on all aspects of school life and are provided with leadership and stewardship opportunities through the school council structure, the president team in the sixth form and the many committees such as charities, digital leaders and entertainment.
- 4.13 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy attitudes to eating and exercise. In the EYFS children understand the importance of healthy eating, exercise and personal hygiene, which they manage independently. The catering staff work with the school to ensure pupils benefit from a diverse range of well balanced eating options which were commented on enthusiastically by the pupils. Curricular and extra-curricular sporting opportunities encourage pupils to take regular exercise. In the EYFS challenging outdoor environments, including a woodland classroom, support children's physical development and staff take every opportunity to reinforce the importance of physical exercise.

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

- 4.14 The quality of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school's aim to provide a safe and secure environment is achieved through excellent management of the welfare and health and safety procedures and this makes a significant contribution to the pupils' excellent personal development. A health and safety committee meets each term to discuss and to monitor any issues or concerns and this is managed by a health and safety officer. The comprehensive health and safety arrangements can be easily accessed by all staff digitally for guidance and this information is also condensed into an excellent brief reference guide for all members of the teaching, administrative and support staff. Risk assessments are produced for appropriate circumstances. Trips and visits are all assessed and adjusted for each occasion to include medical details for any individual pupils. Children in the EYFS exhibit good levels of independence, and

have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe due to carefully managed risk taking opportunities and classroom discussions.

- 4.16 Procedures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are exemplary. A company is employed to check fire and alarm equipment, emergency lighting and all portable electrical equipment regularly. Fire escape routes are clearly signed and evacuation practices once a term are carefully logged and evaluated. Maintenance is well managed with frequent checks on water management. Drinking water is clearly labelled.
- 4.17 Pupils' welfare is carefully managed and supported. Welfare policies are clear, implemented efficiently and reviewed annually by members of the management team and by the governing body. Lines of communication throughout the whole school regarding pupil welfare are efficient and aided by the confidential staff portal containing necessary records. Consequently pupils feel safe and valued by well informed and trusted staff. Particular attention is paid to safeguarding and child protection. Staff, volunteers and governors are suitably trained in child protection including staff new to the school through their induction training. A governor has specific responsibility for child protection and the board of governors takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. The school has developed an excellent relationship with the local authority.
- 4.18 Provision for sick or injured pupils is excellent and includes a dedicated medical centre with a qualified nurse. The school frequently reassesses its SENDA plan in order to make the site as accessible as possible. Individual plans are put in place for temporarily disabled pupils.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and 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 governing body has a clear vision for the future of the school and is highly successful in supporting its aims and developing its ethos. The successful sharing and realisation of this vision with the senior leadership team is providing an exceptional educational experience for the young people in their care. The governors have a valuable range of expertise and skill and are a strong source of advice and support to all of the schools who make up the Foundation.
- 5.3 Governors maintain excellent oversight of the school through the work of a number of sub-committees. A 'blue sky thinking' group comprising the general purpose committee and other selected members of the governing body and the senior leadership team successfully addressed the Foundation's strategic issues and planning. This has now been replaced by a steering group which continues to explore and develop ambitious plans for the future which are carefully monitored and evaluated. Through perceptive financial management they ensure the school is well maintained with high quality accommodation, facilities and resources. They have been particularly successful in supporting the recruitment of high quality staff, especially at management level. Minutes of meetings show that they fully understand their role and maintain strong oversight of those areas where they have legal responsibilities including the suitability and implementation of school policies. A designated governor for safeguarding and child protection ensures that the efficiency of the policy and procedures are reviewed annually at a full governors' meeting. Other designated governors are effective in their responsibility for EYFS and SEND. Similarly, the welfare, staff recruitment, and health and safety arrangements are regularly reviewed, monitored and assessed.
- 5.4 Each term three governors visit different schools in the Foundation to keep them informed of progress and maintain good communication with the staff. Senior staff and heads of department attend governing body meetings to talk about educational developments in their areas. The governors are well known at the school both at formal occasions and also through sampling the pupils' curricular experience.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership at all levels, including in the EYFS, is excellent. Strong visionary direction by the leadership team ensures that the school fulfils its aims of equipping its pupils with the learning habits necessary to play an active role in the increasingly international world of the twenty-first century. The emphasis on forward thinking and what the future might hold for young people lies at the heart of this dynamic school. The enthusiastic and collaborative senior leadership and management team work effectively, and with passion, to embed these values throughout the whole school community. This has resulted in the successful implementation of a wide range of initiatives which has enhanced the learning experience of all pupils and has enabled them to achieve at exceptional levels.

- 5.7 The school has a highly successful programme of self-evaluation which allows appropriate strategic and operational priorities to be established and reviewed on a regular basis. Reflective analysis together with the extensive changes implemented since the previous inspection have strongly influenced every area of the school and ensure that the pupils' education is of the highest quality. All staff have the opportunity to contribute to the school's future development through the well-established planning systems that are in place at all levels.
- 5.8 In the EYFS the inspirational leadership and management, and continuous self-evaluation, provide the foundation for continued and ambitious development. The safeguarding of children in the EYFS is safely ensured. Leadership and management in the pre-prep and junior school are highly effective and cohesive. All staff feel valued and are motivated to share the Foundation vision. Aided by the heads of year they ensure that the provision for pupils' learning is reflective and creative. Successful use of the tablet technology enables effective communication and planning between the two pre-prep sites. The management team of the pre-prep move seamlessly between the two areas and in times of change the staff gain confidence from their presence and encouragement.
- 5.9 Leadership and management in the senior school and sixth form college is characterised by commitment, dedication and focus, ensuring that individual students receive outstanding support and guidance appropriate to their needs. In the sixth form college, practical, proactive management is characterised by a clear sense of purpose. Throughout the senior school and sixth form, heads of department are highly motivated by the trust placed in them by the leadership team allowing exemplary initiatives to be implemented.
- 5.10 The school endeavours to appoint and retain staff of the highest academic calibre, in support of the school's aims. Professional development is given a high priority. All staff benefit from an extensive range of opportunities and of particular note is the ICT training. The school has successfully reviewed and implemented a professional development system for all teaching staff, as recommended in the previous inspection report. The management of support staff is highly successful. Arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors to work with children are thorough and the single central register is maintained effectively. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.11 The quality of links between the school and parents is excellent and strongly supports the school's aims. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, especially regarding the high standard of behaviour in the school, the progress their children make and the provision of information. They feel that their children are safe and happy and well-looked after. In the EYFS close communication between school and home underpins a supportive partnership with parents. Detailed reports and parents evenings keep all parents well informed of their children's progress. However, throughout the school, there is a lack of consistency in the provision of written advice about how to progress further. Parents feel that the school involves them in events and other aspects of its work and they are warmly welcomed into school. Any concerns are handled in accordance with school policies. The Parents and Friends Association is an active body which encourages parental support of the school. Highly effective use is made of electronic communication including social media and blogs; weekly newsletters are extremely informative, engaging and thought provoking. The junior school and pre-prep communicate daily with parents. All parents benefit from a comprehensive

website and parent portal. Detailed handbooks and publications on a range of school matters, including showcasing pupils' work are available to parents throughout the year.

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