



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

GATEWAYS SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Gateways School
DfE Number	383/6007
EYFS Number	EY309575
Registered Charity Number	529206
Address	Gateways School Harewood Leeds West Yorkshire LS17 9LE
Telephone Number	0113 2886345
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Email Address	gateways@gatewayschool.co.uk
Headmistress	Dr Tracy Johnson
Chair of Governors	Mr Martin Shaw
Age Range	2 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	381 (girls 335; boys 46)
Gender of Pupils	Girls aged 2 to 18; boys aged 2 to 7
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 24 5-11: 110 3-5 (EYFS): 58 11-18: 189
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 381
Number of Boarders	Total: 0
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Carol Bartle
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	2nd to 5th Oct 2012

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 December 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) (England) Regulations 2010. 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.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Mrs Julia Burns

Mr Michael Hewett

Mrs Susan Mitchell

Dr David Pacini

Mrs Ann Richards

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)

Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Former Head, GSA school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Gateways School is a day school for girls from the ages of two to eighteen. Boys have been educated at the school up to the age of seven for some years and, since September 2011, they have been able to stay on until the age of eleven. This is being implemented gradually so that, by 2016, the preparatory school will be co-educational throughout. The school was founded as a preparatory school by two teachers in 1941, with secondary provision being introduced in the 1960s, and it began in a converted house in Alwoodley, Leeds. In 1947, the school leased the Dower House on the Harewood estate and this building remains at the heart of its 22-acre site located between north Leeds and Harrogate. Over the years, further buildings and facilities have been added and, since the previous inspection, they include the provision of a dance studio, sixth-form study area and rugby pitches. The school has gained International School status and the Artsmark Gold award. It is run as a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. The current headmistress was appointed in September 2012.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, 381 pupils were on the roll, 46 boys and 335 girls. Eighty-two children were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) of whom 24 were under the age of 3 and 53 attended part-time. One hundred and ten pupils are in the prep school (Years 1 to 6) and 189 are in the high school (Years 7 to 13), including 49 pupils in the sixth form. Forty-nine pupils have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly for dyslexia and information processing, of whom two have statements of special educational needs. Approximately 1 in 15 pupils comes from a minority ethnic background, and 11 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), of whom four are at an early stage of learning English. Most pupils come from families with a professional, business or rural background and live in North Leeds, Harrogate, Wetherby and the surrounding villages. The ability profile of the prep school is broadly in line with the national average with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. In the high school, the ability profile is above the national average in Year 7 and in line with the national average in Year 10; a wider range of abilities is seen as more pupils join the school between those year groups. In the sixth form, after discussion with the school, the ability profile is judged to be in line with the national average for sixth forms.
- 1.3 Gateways aims to offer a personal education that places individuals at its heart and allows everyone to shine. It seeks to teach an excellent academic programme, with high standards and high expectations so that each pupil may secure the best possible qualifications, which are praised and celebrated. The school strives to offer vitality and personal growth through diverse and enriching opportunities allowing flair and talents to flourish within a happy, safe and secure environment, so that caring relationships based on mutual trust and respect that support and encourage every pupil can develop. It aims to ensure a seamless transition across all sections of the school with all pupils working side-by-side as one community, supported by a strong home-school partnership.

- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Pre-Nursery age 2-3
Pre-Reception	Nursery age 3-4
Reception	Reception age 4-5

Preparatory School

School	NC name
Transition	Year 1
Lower 1	Year 2
Upper 1	Year 3
Lower 2	Year 4
Upper 2	Year 5
Lower 3	Year 6

High School

School	NC name
Upper 3	Year 7
Lower 4	Year 8
Upper 4	Year 9
Lower 5	Year 10
Upper 5	Year 11
Lower 6	Year 12
Upper 6	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Gateways School fulfils its aims highly successfully. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are excellent and they make extremely good progress across academic and extra-curricular activities, with a very wide range of pursuits available through clubs, visits and residential trips. Achievement is particularly strong at Year 11 and in the sixth form. Supporting these high achievements are the exceptional relationships between all in the school community, the pupils' exemplary behaviour and their outstanding attitudes to learning. The school provides an excellent curriculum and this, together with high quality teaching and assessment, enables pupils to develop their strong literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and creative skills. The provision for those who have EAL, SEND or those who are more able, gifted and talented is also of high quality and staff support, within the classroom and in specialist lessons, enables those pupils to make excellent progress in relation to their ability.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent and is supported by excellent levels of pastoral care. Pupils throughout the school are confident, very articulate and mature for their ages. Their social development is extremely strong and they collaborate very well. The sixth-form mentoring system for girls who join the high school in Year 7 works particularly well and pupils from Year 4 upwards appreciate the vertical house structure, fulfilling the aim of all pupils working side-by-side as one community. Throughout the school, pupils have a strong awareness of their responsibilities to others less fortunate locally, nationally and internationally, and they appreciate their own and others' cultural heritage. The care given by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, throughout the school is outstanding. The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, with day-to-day procedures for safeguarding being secure.
- 2.3 Governors have a sound oversight of the school but they do not yet have a formal system for monitoring and evaluating the school's compliance with the regulatory requirements. Thus while all staff have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and recently-appointed staff have been correctly checked, the school has been less rigorous in following its recruitment processes in a few cases since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are good, ensuring that the school's aims are fulfilled. Senior leadership, supported by a strong staff team, is deeply committed to the pupils' excellent achievement and personal development. The recently-appointed headmistress is formulating her vision for the future into a new development plan. The current school improvement plan is not sufficiently focused because it has too many targets. Management processes are undertaken rigorously, particularly the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Clear links exist between the appraisal system, staff professional development and the school improvement plan. The school promotes strong links with parents; however, the written reports parents receive about their child's progress do not always contain sufficient detail.
- 2.4 The school has made good progress since the previous inspection concerning sharing good practice in teaching to provide more variety and greater pace in all lessons.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.5 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that, in future, all recruitment checks are carried out on staff before their appointment [Part 4, paragraphs 19(2)(a) and 22(3)(b), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7, under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.6 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop a formal system for the governors to monitor and evaluate the school's compliance with regulatory requirements.
 2. Construct the new school development plan so that it is focused on the key priorities for the next three years.
 3. Ensure that the annual written reports to parents always contain sufficient detail about the progress made and set targets for improvement.
 4. Clearly record the evidence for the assessment judgements which are made in the EYFS.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aim to provide a personal education that encourages all to achieve at a high level in a range of different subjects, but particularly in their individual areas of strength, so that they gain the best possible qualifications for their future. Overall, pupils develop their understanding, knowledge and skills extremely well in all subject areas and in their many extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils are highly articulate and can converse eloquently about the topics or issues in which they are interested. They listen to each other and their teachers carefully, their reading is fluent and their extended writing is expressive. Their numeracy skills are strong and are applied well. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and used across the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate their creativity in the very high quality of work seen in several departments, but particularly in art, food technology, textiles, drama and dance, which reflect the school's Artsmark gold award. The school has focused on providing critical thinking and enrichment activities which are beginning to have an extremely good impact on pupils' reasoning and logical thinking skills. In the sixth form, girls demonstrate a high level of curiosity, and this is seen in the way they ask relevant questions of their teachers. Throughout the school, their physical skills are developed very effectively through the wide range of sports in which they participate. Pupils' levels of achievement are supported extremely well by excellent teaching, exemplary behaviour, exceptional relationships between all in the community and their own outstanding attitudes to learning.
- 3.4 Pupils succeed exceptionally well in a range of extra-curricular activities which makes a significant contribution to their personal development. They participated with success in the junior, intermediate and senior UK Maths Challenge at gold, silver and bronze levels. The vast majority of those who entered instrumental music or speech and drama examinations were awarded a merit or distinction. The sixth-form girls have the opportunity to become junior sports leaders, and fifty have received that award so far. Many older pupils are involved in debating history, the biology challenge, a chemistry festival and 'economist of the year' at national level, and pupils are successful every year in the local young enterprise competition and debating competition. Sixth-form pupils take the certificate of spoken English and almost all pupils achieve distinctions or merits. Individuals do well in external dance productions and the national technology award. Teams and individuals are victorious in sport at all ages, for example district and county netball and national representation in gymnastics. Within the last academic year, four girls have achieved their gold, 15 their silver and 49 their bronze Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award. When they leave Gateways at the age of 18, the great majority of pupils continue their education at university by gaining places at their first choice institution.
- 3.5 In the prep school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. These pupils follow a broad curriculum and move into the high school at the age of eleven. Inspection evidence confirms this judgement, and includes consideration of the levels at which pupils are working in relation to national targets. In the high school, the following analysis uses

the national data for the years 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. The school's GCSE performance has been above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE mathematics have been similar to the worldwide average. Results in IGCSE science have been higher than the worldwide average and similar to the UK average. The A-level results have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and also above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. These levels of attainment throughout the school indicate that pupils make an excellent rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress, lesson observation, work produced and curriculum interviews with pupils.

- 3.6 Pupils with SEND, EAL and more able pupils also achieve very well because staff ensure that the tasks they are given in subject lessons challenge them at their own level of ability and they are well supported in class by their teachers and teaching assistants when necessary; for example, pupils with SEND in the prep school are able to recognise grammatical terms and explain what their function is in a sentence. Individual help in extra lessons given by a specialist also enables these pupils to make at least good, and sometimes excellent, progress. The programme of work designed for more able pupils throughout the school gives them an opportunity to work at a brisk pace and to think independently.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they approach their work with enthusiasm, they concentrate very well, they show great application and perseverance in lessons, and they are fully involved in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils collaborate exceptionally well during lessons, and work with the same interest and determination individually. The presentation of their work is consistently neat and well-organised. Their behaviour is exemplary and they clearly enjoy their learning.

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

- 3.8 The quality of the curriculum is excellent.
- 3.9 It is suitable for the age and ability range of the pupils and is very well planned. It is extremely successful in fulfilling the school's aim of offering an excellent academic programme with high standards and expectations and is essential in contributing to pupils' high level of achievement and success. Pupils in the prep school and those in Years 7 to 9 follow the National Curriculum, with personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and religious studies (RS) in addition. As pupils get older, lessons in the prep school are more frequently taught by specialists, and this is the norm in the high school. French is taught from the EYFS upwards; in Year 7, pupils continue with French and take up Spanish, and German is taught in Year 8 along with classics, which includes an introduction to Latin. Year 7 participate in an expressive arts carousel and a thinking skills programme. Setting by ability takes place in some subjects such as mathematics. At GCSE, pupils take the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the latter two leading to IGCSE, and there are four further options along with short courses in RS and ICT; the flexibility of the timetable enables almost all option choices to be accommodated at GCSE and A level. Twenty-one subjects are offered in the sixth form, supplemented by an enrichment programme including UCAS guidance, the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), physical education (PE) and the DofE Award. These courses make a significant contribution to the personal development of the sixth-form pupils

and prepare them well for life at university or in employment. The curriculum planning in all subjects is of a high quality.

- 3.10 There is a detailed and thorough careers programme throughout the high school, covering careers options, future economic issues, curriculum vitae writing and university advice, supplemented by careers fairs and work experience in Year 10. The PSHE programme, which reflects the aims and ethos of the school, is extremely well organised and supported by a very good range of resources. Topics covered include thinking skills in the prep school, and emotional literacy, self-organisation, friendships and relationship matters in the high school. The school has a well-developed programme to support and challenge more able, gifted and talented pupils by providing additional high level work in lessons, through homework tasks and in a special programme of activities across all areas of the curriculum.
- 3.11 The provision for pupils with SEND throughout the school is strong, achieved by careful monitoring and the matching of tasks to pupils' needs by classroom assistants and teachers as well as small group and 'ad hoc' individual support lessons. Pupils with SEND are given individual education plans with targets which enable them to make excellent progress along with their peers. Those pupils with statements are provided with an education which fully meets the requirements of their statements. There are a small number of EAL pupils who have weekly one-to-one support lessons so that they acquire the necessary fluency in English as swiftly as possible to enable them to access the curriculum effectively.
- 3.12 Extra-curricular provision is excellent. The curriculum is enhanced throughout the school by a very wide range of activities which offer pupils opportunities to pursue individual skills and interests and to develop team-working skills, for example in sport or producing the prep newsletter. There is a large array of trips, for example in the prep school to Tropical World, local castles, museums, theatres and residential visits. In the high school, activities include: involvement in the local enterprise and business programme; trips to London and Edinburgh; language exchanges and cultural visits to France, Spain and Germany; and skiing and outdoor pursuits. Many girls participate in the DofE Award at bronze, silver and gold levels and there is a very substantial programme of sports fixtures, dance, music and drama events.
- 3.13 Links with the community are exceptionally strong, enabling pupils to go out into the local community and wider, to work in schools and in charity shops. Many speakers from a variety of institutions visit the school; staff from a nearby stately home take part in judging business awareness games; prep school pupils take part in sports master-classes with children from local primary schools; and Year 9 pupils compete in a local charity bed race supported by a prep school cheerleading group.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Throughout the school the high quality of teaching is effective in supporting pupils' progress and in promoting the school's aim to teach an academic programme, with high standards and high expectations. Teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements. The best teaching is characterised by clear objectives, well-planned lessons, and effective time management. Such lessons are taken at a brisk pace and include a wide variety of tasks that foster pupils' application, an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are suitably challenged by open-ended questioning; they engage in debate and interactions between themselves and the teacher which allow them to develop higher-order thinking skills and to make rapid progress. In the most successful sixth-form lessons, teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to contribute to discussion and develop their analytical skills.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, teachers have excellent subject knowledge; they are committed and generous with their time. They know their pupils well as individuals. Pupils speak warmly of all the support, help and encouragement they receive in enabling them to achieve highly and to enjoy their studies. As a result, pupils are well motivated and keen to succeed. In almost all lessons, the teaching encouraged behaviour which was exemplary. Lesson planning often allowed for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups extremely well, sharing ideas and working with enthusiastic interest; pupils are curious and responsive learners. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and make a strong contribution to pupils' progress. Teachers employ a wide range of good quality resources to support their teaching, including ICT; effective use of interactive whiteboards assists pupils' learning and understanding.
- 3.17 Teaching responds well to the needs of those who are identified with SEND or EAL. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are given appropriate support in line with the requirements of their statements. In lessons, tasks which are matched to pupils' abilities enable pupils to make at least good progress. Drop-in sessions are provided in several subjects to help them improve the quality of their work. The most able are suitably challenged by extension work and are fully involved in the programme devised for high achievers.
- 3.18 Arrangements for assessment are excellent. Throughout the school detailed collection of academic data is used to increase awareness of pupils' ability and progress. Pupils are assessed from Year 1 onwards using nationally recognised tests as a tool for informing staff of the next steps in pupils' learning and for monitoring progress to GCSE and A level, with target grades being set. This ensures that any learning needs are detected early and that good progress is recognised. Marking of work is regular and in most subjects detailed and thorough. Where it is of an excellent quality, it makes frequent use of praise, target-setting and specific advice to aid improvement. Heads of department monitor the quality of marking to improve its consistency. Pupils are fully aware of their progress; they receive regular feedback from their teachers and appreciate the detailed comments provided on their homework assignments, as well as the grades awarded in reports and at parents' evenings. Whilst a very small minority of pupils raised a concern about homework in their pre-inspection questionnaires, the inspection team found that such tasks are generally appropriate and enable pupils to consolidate their learning and make at least good progress.

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 meets its aim to offer vitality and personal growth through diverse and enriching opportunities so that caring relationships can develop. Pupils are confident and articulate; they readily express their views and, from the youngest pupils onwards, are emotionally mature for their age. Pupils' excellent spiritual development is supported by a well-planned programme of PSHE, RS lessons and assemblies in line with the ethos of the school. Pupils effectively explore different values and beliefs, for example in studies of world religions or issues such as global migration. They reflect well during each day at relevant moments as their spiritual awareness is further promoted by music and the creative arts. In line with the community ethos, pupils participate eagerly and confidently in assemblies and their academic and personal achievements are enthusiastically celebrated. House events encourage vertical interaction within the whole school and special assemblies, such as harvest festival, support the school's community spirit whilst celebrating and understanding individual needs and concerns.
- 4.3 Pupils develop a strong set of moral values and have a very clear awareness of right and wrong. They readily accept the expected levels of conduct and their behaviour is exemplary. Excellent relationships, between staff and pupils and amongst pupils, are at the heart of the success of the school. Prep school pupils enjoy 'circle time' and they enthusiastically contribute to discussions. Throughout the school, pupils have an excellent understanding of friendship and relationship issues, and ethical issues such as the effects of poverty and drugs in a historical context or perceived beauty and disability are discussed; they give convincing reasons for their views. Pupils have a strong respect for the environment.
- 4.4 A sense of responsibility and politeness is clearly evident. Pupils learn to work with one another extremely co-operatively and to share resources such as computers. In the prep school, Year 6 pupils have posts of responsibility and leadership, and actively support pupils in the EYFS. There are many such opportunities for sixth-form pupils, including the roles of head girls, house captains and prefects. The school council comprising of elected pupils from all ages provides a platform for them to take responsibility and ensures a caring approach is engendered throughout the school. They have an excellent social conscience and help those less fortunate than themselves through the service element of the DofE Award and they raise money for many local and international charities. Pupils have a great appreciation of the concerns of others, as a recent trip to Cambodia demonstrated, where voluntary service, consisting of building works and re-decorating an orphanage, was undertaken by pupils from the sixth form. Pupils also demonstrate their strong social, political and economic awareness through discussions held with visiting speakers, such as magistrates talking about the criminal justice system.
- 4.5 Pupils in all year groups have an excellent awareness of many cultures, which is promoted through a wide range of activities such as music, drama and dance, and enabled the school to achieve International School status. All pupils develop a strong awareness of their own culture through visits to museums, theatres and galleries. High school pupils effectively understand other cultures, through many trips and visits around the world to places such as Auschwitz as well as through the

school's community outreach programme. Prep school pupils develop their good understanding of cultural issues through events such as the Egyptian day and discussions on citizenship in PSHE lessons. High school pupils demonstrate strong support for those pupils who come from overseas and enjoy working side-by-side as one community.

- 4.6 By the time the pupils leave the school they demonstrate an extremely high standard of personal development. They are mature, well-rounded and caring individuals who are capable of making an outstanding contribution to the world at large.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care to pupils' personal development is excellent.

- 4.8 Very successful implementation of pastoral policies provides high quality support and guidance for pupils in accordance with the school's aims. Extremely effective co-operation exists between those who are most closely involved in the pastoral structure of the school. Regular and minuted meetings of pastoral staff ensure that any concerns and actions are effectively communicated to all relevant staff, contributing greatly to the personal development of individual pupils. Pupils across the full age range said they felt very happy and safe at school. Relationships throughout the school between staff and pupils are outstanding. Warmth and approachability ensure pupils feel valued and cared for, and in conversations, pupils said that they knew who to go to if they had a problem. Relationships are similarly positive between the pupils themselves. Older girls do much to help the younger ones, such as acting as mentors in Year 12, and 'house sisters' in Year 9, to Year 7 pupils.

- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. During interviews girls acknowledged that there was always something to eat that they enjoy, even though in pre-inspection questionnaires a small minority expressed concern over the provision of lunches. Inspectors believe the quality and choice at lunchtime is extremely good. The considerable curricular and extra-curricular programme of PE, sports and games ensures that pupils take regular exercise.

- 4.10 A very large number of the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school achieved high standards of behaviour and this view was confirmed during the inspection. Pupils are extremely polite and considerate, conducting themselves in an exemplary fashion, fully in accordance with the school's policy. Highly effective procedures exist for promoting good behaviour and acknowledging good performance. House points are awarded for good work, special effort and helpful conduct. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that teachers were not always fair in the way they issued rewards; however, in the many discussions held, pupils did not substantiate this view. Sanctions are rarely used but when necessary are given according to a clear procedure. Pupils say that instances of bullying are very rare and they have great confidence that staff will resolve any problems promptly and effectively.

- 4.11 The school has a suitable accessibility plan to increase the educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- 4.12 In the many interviews held, pupils throughout the school value the role of the school council. They receive regular feedback and responses to the ideas they have raised, so they feel their views are considered. The inspectors found no evidence to

support the view of a small minority of pupils who stated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that their opinions were not sought nor did they receive a response.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.14 The day-to-day arrangements for safeguarding of pupils in the school are strong. The safeguarding policy is known and followed and there are very good links with the local social services. Any child protection issues that have arisen have been dealt with according to local guidelines. However, the implementation of the policy has not been as strong; recruitment checks on staff have not always been carried out sufficiently rigorously. The staff are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and have received the appropriate training.
- 4.15 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, including chemicals and mechanical and electrical equipment. Regular fire practices are held and a fire risk assessment has been carried out. Fire evacuation procedures and exits are clearly stated around the school. Arrangements for health and safety are extremely effective. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for buildings, curriculum activities and school trips. First aid kits are highly visible in all areas of the school and the medical room provides appropriate facilities for pupils who fall ill during the school day. Staff ensure that those pupils with SEND are particularly protected from hazards and the school has provided a lift, a chair lift and low level access to all buildings for pupils with physical disabilities.
- 4.16 Registers accurately record pupils' admission to, and attendance at, the school and these are suitably maintained and stored as required for three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 The quality of governance is sound.

5.2 The governing body administers the school appropriately in line with its aim of offering a personal education that places individuals at its heart and allows them to shine. The governors' committee structure and the expertise of individual governors strongly support the educational direction of the school and the chair meets with the headmistress at least fortnightly. Some governors have been given particular oversight of aspects of the school, such as the EYFS, child protection, health and safety, careers and support for university applicants. Governors meet with groups of staff before each governors' meeting which keeps avenues of communication open. The headmistress and finance officer prepare reports for the board's meetings which give good information about the school's successes and challenges for the future. Governors' minutes indicate that they respond to issues as they arise. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents said that their concerns have not been handled well. Inspectors have insufficient evidence to support these views. The complaints policy is clear and detailed, and available to parents on the school's website. There have been no formal complaints within the previous academic year. The governors prepare a detailed annual review for parents and they have recently carried out a self-assessment of their effectiveness. All governors attend the school for various special events and some observe classes, which strengthens their oversight and knowledge of the school.

5.3 Strategic and financial planning are strong and governors make suitable provision for human and material resources, and accommodation. They support the senior managers in their framing of the school improvement plan and also provide some level of challenge for the school's future development. The board endeavours to keep abreast of its responsibilities for welfare, health and safety and safeguarding through the training in which it participates, and the full board has undertaken its annual duty to review the safeguarding policy and procedures; however, it has not monitored the implementation of these in order to comply with regulations as rigorously as it should. Currently there is no formal system for doing so, with the result that recruitment checks have not been reliably carried out in the past.

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

5.4 Leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, are good.

5.5 The school successfully fulfils its aim of providing a personal education that places individuals at its heart with all pupils working side-by-side as one community, supported by a strong home-school partnership. This success demonstrates the excellent quality of the educational experience offered and the extremely strong personal development of the pupils. The current school improvement plan is well set out, but priorities for development are not reflected in a focused way as there are too many targets for the staff to contribute productively to its fulfilment. The recently-appointed headmistress is formulating her vision for the next steps in the school's development into a new plan, and she is supported effectively by the leadership

team and a strong, cohesive and committed group of teaching and non-teaching staff.

- 5.6 Subject leaders are involved in lesson observation, work scrutiny and checks on lesson planning, and all teaching staff participate in peer observation, which results in the sharing of good practice throughout the school, a recommendation at the time of the previous inspection. Senior managers reflect continuously on securing improvement, as seen in the current changes to the appraisal process. A strong feature of management is the way in which clear links exist between the appraisal system, staff professional development and the school improvement plan. Subject leaders have also prepared reflective action plans for their subjects which they share with governors annually. All school policies are regularly reviewed concerning content and, in almost all cases, their implementation, and staff have been suitably trained for their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Communication between staff, both formal and informal, about academic and pastoral matters is focused on promoting the best outcomes for pupils.
- 5.7 Staff recruitment checks have not always been meticulously carried out since the previous inspection. A few staff have been appointed before all checks were completed, although no procedures are currently outstanding and all staff have been checked with the CRB. The checks on the most recent staff to be appointed have been undertaken with rigour. The premises and grounds are outstanding and are extremely well maintained. The care and expertise of all those who work to support the pupils through the administration, catering, and maintenance departments enable the school to run very efficiently. Pupils respect their learning environment; high quality displays around the school demonstrate their strong creativity and celebrate their achievements and the effort they put into their work.
- 5.8 Links with parents, carers and guardians are good, fulfilling the aim of a strong home-school partnership. Throughout school, there is an open easy communication and personal interaction on a daily basis if that is required. Staff are readily available to speak to parents and aim to deal with any concerns as soon as they arise. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents were particularly positive about the range of subjects provided and the homework set. In addition they strongly believed their children were happy at school, felt safe and were well looked after. Inspectors agree with these positive views. A very small minority raised issues about the way in which the school deals with any cases of bullying. Inspectors found no evidence that bullying had not being taken seriously and pupils say that bullying is rare.
- 5.9 There are many opportunities for parents to get involved in the life of the school. Parents are invited to assemblies and curriculum information evenings and there is a weekly open morning for parents of pupils and prospective pupils. A range of parents accompany pupils on outings. An enthusiastic 'Friends of Gateways' puts on many events for parents and raises a significant sum of money for the school. Detailed information is readily available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils through the prospectus and informative school website. Parents are well informed about events and issues by good quality letters mostly sent by regular e-mail. A colourful and informative e-newsletter is published weekly and a magazine termly. In addition, an annual report to parents is produced by the governors. New parents and pupils are welcomed to the school at any age.
- 5.10 A variety of grade reports and half-term reviews are sent out at appropriate times of the year in support of the annual full written reports. Parents' evenings for various

year groups throughout the year give parents the opportunity to discuss formally their child's progress in detail. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few parents raised an issue concerning the lack of information given to them about their child's progress. Inspectors agree with these concerns. Annual written reports do not always give sufficient detail about progress made and do not set targets for the future.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 6.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. The educational programmes for children of all ages and across the seven areas of learning are exceptional and enable most children to reach high levels of development. There are varied and imaginative experiences for all children, including those with SEND and EAL, so that all have the opportunity to do well according to their abilities. The outdoor provision is outstanding with a rich variety of experiences across the curriculum including a climbing wall, a sensory musical garden, large construction area and a covered outdoor classroom which engages and motivates children. The innovative outdoor environment has been given a commendation award by the local authority and is a model of good practice for other providers. In the Nursery, daily walks in the extensive grounds provide many opportunities for the two-year-olds, including one walk looking for signs of autumn which provided opportunities for language, mathematical and physical development as well as understanding of the world. Practitioners have very high expectations of themselves and the children, they possess expert knowledge of the areas of learning and they have a clear understanding of how young children learn.
- 6.2 Assessment is regular, carried out by all staff and is used effectively to plan suitably challenging activities. Staff regularly listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question children during activities to inform them of the next steps in learning. On a few occasions, there is insufficient recorded evidence for the assessment judgements which are made. Children of all ages are very well motivated, very eager to join in and consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning, particularly those children in Reception. The emphasis on supporting social and emotional development enables children to feel secure and helps them make rapid progress in their learning, so they are ready to move on to the next class.
- 6.3 Parents and carers appreciate the help for children to settle in quickly and the continuous support provided by the 'key contact' staff. The setting has an open door policy, provides helpful parents' booklets and a noticeboard for information, and parents are regularly invited to curriculum evenings and to observe lessons. They are kept very well informed about their children's progress and report that they are delighted with all aspects of the setting.

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

- 6.4 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. All practitioners are highly skilled in helping children form secure emotional attachments especially for the youngest children through the 'key contact' system. Staff ensure that children behave very well, respect each other and play together exceptionally well, being excellent role models for them. They encourage them to develop hygiene routines independently, to make healthy choices in food and to participate in physical exercise. They particularly encourage the children to use their imaginations in role play and talk about their interests; for example, at 'show and tell' time in Reception, children talked confidently about objects they had brought from home and invited questions. Staff give the highest priority to safety and support children's growing understanding

of how to keep themselves safe and healthy; for example, the youngest children hold on to a rope as they safely walk in twos to the dining room for lunch. Risk is managed extremely well. The transition from one year group to another is carefully planned preparing them extremely well for the next stage.

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

- 6.5 The leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. There is a governor responsible for the EYFS who takes a keen interest and makes regular visits, reporting back to the governing body alongside the reports of the headmistress. On a day-to-day basis, children are cared for extremely well in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS are understood by leaders and managers and are extremely well met. All staff have been trained in safeguarding and clear policies are known and understood by all staff and implemented rigorously.
- 6.6 Thorough self-evaluation takes account of the views of staff and children, and links very well with a good system of supervision and professional review and development which is undertaken by all staff. This is helping practitioners to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice, and set challenging targets for future improvement. Planning is monitored to make sure it is consistent, and gives the staff an accurate understanding of all children's skills and abilities. Individual children or groups of children with identified needs are monitored so that appropriate interventions are sought. Partnerships with parents, external agencies and other providers are well established and make a strong contribution to meeting children's needs.

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

- 6.7 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are outstanding. All children, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able, make at least good progress relative to their starting points and their needs are strongly met. The youngest children are learning to count, recognise colours and enjoy re-telling stories from favourite books. In Reception, children know initial sounds and use them to build words, they solve mathematical problems with numbers to ten and understand simple addition and subtraction. They adeptly use computers and interactive whiteboards with confidence.
- 6.8 The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding and a strength of the setting. Even the youngest children happily share toys, take turns and feel safe. The older children respect each other, organise themselves quickly when required and independently make choices concerning the resources they need. The children readily trust in the support of the staff who properly safeguard their welfare. The strong development plan indicates that there is a clear commitment to continuous improvement, as seen in the good progress made since the previous inspection concerning the provision for more able children.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.9 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.