



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**SOUTH HAMPSTEAD HIGH SCHOOL GDST**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## South Hampstead High School GDST

Full Name of School	<b>South Hampstead High School GDST</b>
DfE Number	<b>202/6307</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>306983</b>
Address	<b>South Hampstead High School GDST 3 Maresfield Gardens London NW3 5SS</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 7435 2899</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 7431 8022</b>
Email Address	<b>senior@shhs.gdst.net</b>
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Helen Pike</b>
Chair of the Local Board of Governors	<b>Mr John Rosefield</b>
Age Range	<b>4 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>913</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>4-5 (EYFS): 24    5-11: 240 11-18:        649</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Gabrielle Solti</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>10 Nov 2015 to 13 Nov 2015</b>

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI integrated inspection was in September 2009.

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 children aged under two), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff, with the chair and others from the local board of governors, and with a representative of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST). Inspectors also 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

Mr George Fisher	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Gill Bilbo	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mrs Penny Austin	Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Merriman	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Duncan Byrne	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Diane Durrant	Team Inspector (Head, Society of Heads school)
Mr Michael Horrocks-Taylor	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Ms Heather McKissack	Team Inspector (Senior Mistress, HMC school)
Mr Rod Spencer	Team Inspector (Former Senior Master, HMC school)
Mrs Elizabeth Thomas	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 South Hampstead High School was founded in 1876 and moved to its present site in the suburbs of north London in 1882. The school provides education for girls between the ages of 4 and 18. It is one of a group of schools owned and managed by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), which has overall responsibility for the governance of the school and is supported by the school's local board of governors. The junior school, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children under the age of five, is about half a mile from the senior school. The overall school leadership and management is in the hands of the senior school headmistress, and on a day-to-day basis the junior school is led and managed by the junior school headmistress, who is also the head of the EYFS.
- 1.2 The school's aims are to foster a spirit of aspiration, resilience and joy in learning, whilst encouraging a culture of creativity and achievement which is both intellectual and enjoyable. The school also seeks to develop a spirit of service and community which is built on respect, kindness and toleration. Since the previous inspection, the junior and senior schools have had new headmistresses appointed, both in 2013. A new senior school building was completed in 2014. The senior management teams in both schools have been restructured, and the schools' curricula and schedules have been revised.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 264 pupils were in the junior school, aged 4 to 11, of whom 24 were in the EYFS. The senior school comprised of 649 pupils, aged 11 to 18, including 165 in Years 12 and 13. The ability profile is above the national average throughout the junior and senior schools. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage, around 1 in 9 pupils come from various minority ethnic backgrounds, and a third of are of the Jewish faith. Girls come primarily from professional families across North London.
- 1.4 Sixty-six pupils receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), but none has an education, health and care plan, or a statement of special educational needs. Of those requiring additional support, the majority have some form of dyslexia. One hundred and eighteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), and currently none is identified as requiring any specialist support within the school.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in providing an excellent quality of education and it fully meets its aims to foster a spirit of aspiration, resilience and joy in learning, in order to equip the pupils for life. The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent. Throughout the school pupils are highly motivated, articulate and have strongly developed skills for learning. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of child-initiated activities within the EYFS has been increased and a stronger emphasis is placed on self-evaluation. Pupils throughout the school, including the most able and those with SEND or EAL, make at least good progress in relation to their ability. The curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent, providing a strong platform for academic study and an extensive range of challenging and enjoyable opportunities for enrichment. The contribution of teaching throughout the school is excellent and has improved since the previous inspection; it is extremely effective in meeting pupils' needs. Pupils excel in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including within sport and the creative arts.
- 2.2 The pupils' outstanding personal development is apparent in their increasing self-confidence and in the easy manner in which they relate both to their peers throughout the school and to adults. They are self-aware, reflective and show initiative in suggesting constructive change within their community and in taking on positions of responsibility. High standards of behaviour are maintained throughout. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and that, when it does happen, it is managed effectively by staff. The school has strong measures in place to counter cyberbullying. Pastoral care is excellent and the school's espoused values of toleration, openness, respect, co-operation and happiness permeate the community. Measures to promote welfare, health and safety are good. Since the previous inspection, the number of washrooms in the junior school has been increased. The school dealt swiftly with minor flaws in health and safety within the older buildings which were noted during the inspection.
- 2.3 Good governance is provided through the GDST and the local board of governors. The two-tiered system is successful in enabling the school to meet its aims and in providing an appropriate balance of support and challenge for the school's leadership. Since the previous inspection the trust has funded a rebuilding of the senior school, fully meeting the recommendation at that time. The school's governance understands its responsibilities for safeguarding. Leadership and management of the school are good and establish a clear vision and strategy for the educational direction of the school which is firmly focused on meeting the individual needs of pupils. The quality of monitoring is uneven, resulting in inconsistent implementation of the provision for the most able pupils and some policies and procedures. Overall, the school has made good progress in the recommendation of the previous inspection concerning making greater use of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, parents expressed their strong support for all aspects of the school's provision.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Monitor more closely the implementation of school policies and procedures to ensure that the good practice seen across the school's operation is fully adopted.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils enjoy learning; they are strongly motivated and are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims, developing their knowledge, understanding and skills across curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 Within the EYFS, children communicate very effectively, using a wide vocabulary. They are able to recognise sounds and use them to make words, and the oldest have started to write in sentences. All can name two and three-dimensional shapes and add single-digit numbers together. They perform creatively in music and dance. The children are active learners and enjoy selecting their own resources for their activities and when creating their own games. They concentrate well, think critically, and work independently. All children in the EYFS reach, and often exceed, the expected levels of attainment at the end of Reception, making strong progress relative to their starting points. Pupils with EAL or SEND benefit from additional help within the EYFS, gaining in confidence as a consequence.
- 3.4 Pupils are highly articulate; they are excellent listeners and write fluently and confidently, demonstrating a range of styles from persuasive writing in Year 5 to analytical and creative work within Years 12 and 13. Pupils enjoy reading, whether to enhance knowledge and understanding or to stimulate their imagination.
- 3.5 Pupils develop secure number skills which they successfully apply to challenging problem solving and investigative work within the junior school, in science lessons in the senior school, and to statistical testing in sixth-form geography. Pupils throughout the school use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to support learning in a range of subjects. Senior school pupils show high levels of creativity, including within design and technology, and logical thought is evident in mathematical and scientific investigations. Pupils' physical skills are excellent throughout, and are promoted through a large number of team and individual pursuits.
- 3.6 Pupils have a wide range of talents and interests, and many achieve national recognition, particularly in sport and in academic and creative areas, for example in debating and public speaking. Junior school pupils have won short story competitions and poetry prizes, and the chamber choir achieved the GDST Choir of the Year award. There have also been successes in local and national art competitions. Senior pupils have a high level of achievement in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), Young Enterprise and science competitions. Almost all pupils from the senior school transfer to higher education, with a high proportion going to universities with demanding entry requirements in this country and abroad.
- 3.7 Junior school pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils follow a demanding curriculum, and at the age of 11 most transfer to the senior school. Alongside evidence from lesson observations, assessment data held by the school, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work, this level of attainment, as judged, shows good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress.

- 3.8 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE are excellent in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools and good for girls in maintained selective schools. International GCSE results have been above both worldwide and UK averages overall. The A-level results have been exceptional in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools and good for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in 2012 were higher than those in 2013 to 2014 and excellent in relation to the average for girls in maintained selective schools, and the results in 2015 are higher than those in 2014. The levels of attainment at GCSE and A level, together with standardised measures of progress, indicate that pupils in the senior school make at least good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.9 Pupils with SEND and those with EAL make good progress due to both the support which they receive and their determination to do well. The most able also make good progress, gaining significantly from the many enrichment activities which are provided. Of those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils believe that they are making good progress in their work, and almost all parents are pleased with the progress their children make.
- 3.10 Pupils at all stages have an excellent work ethic and from an early age are enthusiastic learners. They are mutually co-operative and keen to take advantage of the opportunities which are provided, both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils settle into their tasks quickly, demonstrating perseverance in completing work to a high standard. They show initiative in their learning and, as they mature, their note-taking skills develop increasingly strongly. High levels of organisation are apparent in pupils, together with a real pride in the appearance of their work.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.12 The curriculum and extra-curricular activities make a strong contribution to pupils' progress and towards supporting the school's aims of creating a culture of creativity and achievement, and promoting pursuits beyond the classroom which build character and confidence.
- 3.13 Within the EYFS, the topic-based education programmes provide stimulating, enriching and challenging experiences which are highly effective in promoting the children's development and meeting their needs, with a particular emphasis on speaking and listening skills. A balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities provides children with opportunities to solve problems, create their own play and to explore their ideas, thus fully meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection. The EYFS curriculum is further enhanced by the use of specialist staff for music and physical education.
- 3.14 The curriculum in the rest of the school is highly effective in its coverage of all the required areas of learning. It is appropriate to the age, needs and abilities of the pupils, and benefits from detailed and imaginative planning for individual lessons. Longer-term planning, evident within schemes of work, does not undermine the promotion of British values. Pupils with SEND are supported by specialist co-ordinators in both the junior and senior schools who liaise with subject and pastoral staff and with external professionals, such as educational psychologists, where necessary. Those with EAL are fluent speakers and users of English; no additional

support is required. Provision for the most able is provided through extension work within class and, for those in the senior school, through the highly successful enrichment programme 'Mehr Licht' ('More Light'), which is an outstanding feature of the curriculum and provides significant opportunity for further study and challenge.

- 3.15 In the junior school strong cross-curricular links enrich the pupils' education whilst class-based teaching, including specialist provision in several subject areas, develops their key skills effectively. Opportunities for extending provision are exemplified by the learning for all of a stringed instrument in Year 1 and the introduction of Mandarin in Years 5 and 6.
- 3.16 The curriculum in the senior school has been successfully revised since the previous inspection. A well-structured programme of modern languages provides increasing levels of choice. Setting is used effectively, for example in French within Year 7, where it promotes continuity of challenge between the junior and senior school, and in mathematics, where it enables pupils to progress at a rate appropriate to their ability. Creative and aesthetic subjects have a strong place within the curriculum. In Years 12 and 13 new subjects have been introduced to broaden choice, including classical civilisation, economics and psychology. Analytical skills are developed through the critical thinking course and enrichment is provided through the Extended Project Qualification and a well-planned lecture programme.
- 3.17 The comprehensive and carefully structured personal, social, health and economic education programme covers topics at an age-appropriate level. It ensures that key British values such as democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and mutual respect are actively promoted. This is further supported through assemblies and, for example, the human rights club where pupils in the junior school discussed the plight of Syrian refugees. Throughout the school, the provision helps to prepare pupils for the responsibilities of adult life in modern Britain and ensures a balanced approach to the discussion of opposing political views. Pupils' awareness of their role in supporting the programme to prevent radicalisation and extremism, however, is currently at an early stage. A well-planned and thorough careers guidance programme ensures that senior pupils receive helpful and focused advice on higher education. The school hosts an annual careers convention which, alongside the 'Big Ideas' lecture programme, forms an essential part of their preparation for university and the world of work.
- 3.18 The curriculum is strongly supported by large numbers of educational trips and visits. For example, pupils within Year 3 talked excitedly about their visit to the British Museum. Senior school trips progressively broaden in scope, culminating in expeditions to Morocco and Ecuador as part of World Challenge. Throughout the school an outstanding range of extra-curricular opportunities ensures that every pupil can benefit, greatly contributing to their personal development. The programme is inclusive fully supports the aim of the school to promote pursuits beyond the classroom that build character and confidence.
- 3.19 Pupils are active in raising significant funds for local charities and contributing to community-based projects; those in Years 10 and 11 visit homes for the elderly and various sports teams coach in junior schools, these acts are an increasingly distinctive feature of the school. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they believe their children are offered an appropriate range of subjects.

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

- 3.20 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.21 The quality of teaching plays a key role in helping the school to fulfil its aim of encouraging a culture of creativity and achievement. It has improved since the previous inspection and makes a strong contribution to pupils' high levels of progress. Within the EYFS, staff guide the children expertly in exploring and trying out new activities appropriate to their stage of development; they have high expectations and ensure sufficient time for children to fully utilise the opportunities provided. Staff in the EYFS use open-ended questions to encourage thinking skills, language development and problem solving. Excellent use is made of detailed observations, including timely interventions, to identify the progress of and the next steps in the children's learning. Staff are adept at tailoring the activities to arouse the children's curiosity and interests. The EYFS setting offers a bright and vibrant environment both indoors and outside, which is well equipped and organised so that high quality resources are easily accessible to children.
- 3.22 Teaching throughout the rest of the school benefits from strong subject knowledge, and, in the senior school, from a scholarly approach in which academic rigour and a passion for the subject material promote very high levels of application. In the junior lower years of the senior school, planning is effective and teaching provides sensitive and unobtrusive support by providing suitable resources and individualised advice. It is strongest at the higher end of the ability range where the most able therefore make rapid progress. No specific planning is made for pupils with EAL but teaching is aware of ensuring their rapid progress.
- 3.23 In the junior school, teaching uses careful question-and-answer techniques, often building upon pupils' prior knowledge to build confidence so that they relish new opportunities for learning. Senior school teaching is often unashamedly academic, featuring challenging extension tasks. The majority of teaching demonstrates a fast pace that challenges pupils by moving quickly on to tasks that require higher-order thinking. Such lessons feature open-ended questioning where pupils are challenged to justify and make links between complex ideas. Teaching promotes tolerance, mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding, helping pupils to be extremely well balanced in their outlook on life and engendering a non-partisan awareness of political issues. It frequently provides pupils the opportunity to collaborate over their work and this enhances their learning across age and ability groups. A very small amount of teaching lacks pace and ambition. In such cases, tasks featuring the copying of factual information and closed questions restrict pupils' progress.
- 3.24 Individuals' needs are met very sensitively by teachers' interventions during lessons, often encouraging pupils to take their thinking further. Teaching in the senior school often extends pupils' thinking well beyond the requirements of GCSE and A level, thereby enabling them to appreciate learning for its own sake. In this way teaching helps to foster a deep-rooted interest, and pupils show increasing independence in their approach to study.
- 3.25 The junior school has a good range of learning resources, including an increasing use of ICT where, for example, microscopes are linked to whiteboards, and pupils are able to use electronic tablets and desktop computers both for research purposes and to stimulate interactive learning. In the senior school, teaching makes frequent use of a virtual learning environment which enables pupils to keep track of their work and to communicate electronically with their teachers. Additionally the well-used

library is effective in promoting literacy across the curriculum. High-quality resources in drama, art and music all contribute significantly to pupils' learning.

- 3.26 Throughout the school the best marking is outstanding, with teachers providing detailed comments and setting clear targets for improvement. In a small minority of cases marking did not provide pupils with sufficient feedback and guidance. Elements of self-assessment are used effectively in several subjects and pupils value this opportunity to reflect upon their learning. Teaching makes good use of age appropriate assessments and regular tests to check pupils' understanding. The systems to monitor pupils' progress are highly effective and are kept under constant review; assessment data is used to make timely interventions when a pupil is underperforming. Almost all the pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire believe that their teachers help them to learn, and encourage them to think for themselves and work independently.

## **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 The school is highly successful in actively promoting the personal development of pupils in accordance with its aim of cultivating a spirit of service and community, built on respect, kindness and toleration. The key values that characterise Britishness such as the rule of law, individual freedom and democracy are also actively promoted. By the time they leave the school, pupils are extremely well placed to make a full and positive contribution to modern British society.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, children are encouraged to learn together through gentle reminders about sharing and helping one another. They are asked to suggest which activities they wish to partake in and are encouraged to find the equipment that they require. Children's behaviour is excellent. They show a growing empathy towards each other and a great pride in their own achievements, which are celebrated by the whole class. Children are encouraged to understand the needs of others through their involvement in charity fund-raising, such as taking part in a non-uniform day for an international charity. They respect each other's differences, and parents of different faiths and cultures are invited to act as guest speakers, for example to support World Book Day. Wider British values are actively promoted, for example through rules which promote respect, tolerance and kindness, through opportunities to vote for a class decision and by celebrations such as Harvest Festival, Bonfire Night and royal events. Children join older pupils at playtime and for lunch and assemblies, so preparing them well for the next stage of education.
- 4.4 The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. Pupils throughout are happy, well balanced and self-reflective with attitudes and values which extend well beyond the material, demonstrating highly developed aesthetic and spiritual awareness. Their strong self-awareness is enhanced by excellent assemblies across the school, including the highly effective use of poetry and by the outstanding quality of art work. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem and feel at ease within their community.
- 4.5 The pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils feel self-confident enough to discuss sensitive topics within a safe and respectful school environment. They understand and respect the civil and criminal law of England. Pupils take their responsibilities for the environment seriously, with many younger pupils walking to school for a week to reduce the environmental impact of their usual journey. Pupil-organised awareness weeks highlight issues such as marine conservation. Pupils actively explore contemporary issues through reasoned, lively and informed discussions, and within the junior school develop their awareness of inequality. They are inspired by an extensive programme of carefully selected visiting speakers, including a Holocaust survivor. Pupils have an acutely formed sense of right and wrong, and denounce all forms of discrimination.
- 4.6 Pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility. Their behaviour is usually excellent and they are emotionally mature for their age. Older pupils actively embrace a wide range of responsibility opportunities, acting as 'buddies' to new pupils. They are excellent role models, thereby ensuring that the school's highly developed culture of mutual support is sustained. Pupils develop valuable teamwork skills through active participation in the vibrant extra-curricular life of the school, for example through sport, drama and music, and a widening programme of enjoyable

house challenges. Leadership skills are evident in the junior school where pupils may serve as house captains or be elected as representatives to attend the junior school council. Senior pupils gain valuable leadership skills through the DofE and by training local junior school sports' teams, umpiring fixtures and conducting the choir. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how citizens can influence decision making through the democratic process, through holding mock general elections, applying for junior school 'eco club' positions, voting to select charities and electing the senior head girl team. They acquire a broad general knowledge of the public institutions and services of England.

- 4.7 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. The cultural diversity within the school enhances their understanding, respect and tolerance of other backgrounds. Pupils also develop cultural understanding through their trips abroad. Older pupils have a well-developed understanding of religious festivals and the value British society places on multi-culturalism, evidenced by their recognition of the positive contribution which Sikhs and Hindus make to the local and national community. An active pupil-led 'JSoc' enables senior pupils to develop a strong appreciation of Jewish religion and culture. Knowledge and appreciation of western culture is promoted through numerous visits to theatres and art galleries.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Within the EYFS, key adults are excellent role models and support the children very effectively so that they feel safe and secure, readily seeking support or comfort where needed. Children are eager to come to school and settle quickly, developing good relationships with each other. Adults state very clear guidelines about the expected standards of behaviour to which the children respond, resulting in a productive and happy atmosphere.
- 4.10 Systems for providing pastoral care are highly effective and almost all responses from parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed their confidence in the school's arrangements for looking after their children and encouraging high standards of behaviour. The senior school succeeds in its aim to build a community which is built upon toleration, openness, respect, co-operation and happiness; the school abbreviates this to 'TORCH' to encourage the pupils to reflect on these qualities. In the junior school, systems of care are based on the golden rules. Throughout the school, the arrangements for pastoral care make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- 4.11 Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are excellent and characterised by warmth, good humour and mutual respect. Pupils know to whom to turn should they have a concern. Form tutors, together with co-tutors in the senior school, are supported by trained peer mentors and a house 'buddy' system which creates families within the school houses. A number of professionals provide valuable support for pupils, and at the time of the inspection the school was holding a 'Wellness Week' to provide additional advice on issues such as anxiety and eating disorders, whilst suggesting helpful techniques to promote relaxation strategies.
- 4.12 The school requires and achieves high standards of behaviour. Suitable policies are in place to promote this and to deal constructively with all forms of bullying or harassment, including cyberbullying. Pupils' responses to the pre-inspection

questionnaire, together with a scrutiny of the school's records, shows that instances of bullying are rare, and are dealt with swiftly and appropriately when they occur. A small minority of pupils said that they felt that rewards and sanctions are not awarded fairly, that their workload is unreasonable and that their opinions are not listened to by the school. Inspection evidence, including interviews with pupils and a study of the school's records, found some unevenness in the ways in which rewards are allocated but that the staff's overall approach to sanctions is consistent, suitable and in line with school policy. A review of the rewards and sanctions system was being undertaken at the time of the inspection. Pupils' workload was deemed appropriate, and pupils feel that staff are sympathetic should additional time be required. Both school councils have been effective in making constructive change, in response to suggestions by pupils. For example junior school pupils contributed ideas about which playground equipment to install, and the senior school 'Wellness Week' arose out of suggestions by pupils that it would be beneficial to have more advice on mental health issues.

4.13 At all stages, including the EYFS, pupils are encouraged to be fit and healthy through developing good eating habits and taking regular exercise. The food provided is of a very high quality with plenty of choice. Pupils participate fully in the extensive physical education and games programme.

4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.

4.16 The arrangements make an effective contribution to the pupils' welfare and safety, and are in line with the school's aims. Within the EYFS the provision for children's well-being is good and they are helped to understand and manage risk, such as how to cross the road safely. Children look after their own personal hygiene with great confidence and are suitably supported by adults when additional help is needed. Setting-specific matters such as the use of mobile telephones and staffing levels are covered appropriately.

4.17 The school has an appropriate understanding of its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. The policy has been updated recently to reflect current guidance and is reviewed regularly. By the end of the inspection minor omissions in the recruitment process had been rectified. Safeguarding training for all staff is thorough, relevant to their roles and updated regularly to encompass new imperatives, for example those relating to the prevention of extremism. The school has strong links with local agencies.

4.18 The whole school is very sensitive to the needs of individual pupils, including those with SEND, and it is tireless in providing both support and practical strategies which will enable pupils to take control of their own health and well-being. A health and safety committee is used as a sounding board for staff, and it is constructive in helping to identify issues for consideration and actions to be taken.

4.19 The school has effective measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Equipment is regularly tested, with emergency evacuation practices taking place at least termly. Thorough risk assessments for activities both on and off the school premises are undertaken, with all staff contributing to this process. The site is well maintained and provides a secure and stimulating environment in which to learn. Inspection evidence noted a number of minor flaws in the provision within the older



buildings but, once alerted, the school was quick to remedy these weaknesses. The recommendation from the previous inspection to increase the number of washrooms within the junior school has been met.

- 4.20 The first-aid policy is thorough and the medical centre provides highly effective support for pupils who are sick or injured. Many staff assist in the care for pupils through their first-aid training and all staff within the EYFS are trained in paediatric first aid.
- 4.21 Admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance is provided both through the council of the GDST and the local board of governors. The trust is effective in providing oversight of the school and in enabling it to meet its aims. The significant and recent investment in the senior school, leading to the construction of a new building, has provided strong impetus to the school and fully meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. The trust carries out the annual audit of safeguarding. The trust is very successful in managing the finances of the school, thereby ensuring the necessary investment in staffing and resources.
- 5.3 The local board of governors benefits from the dedication of its members, including those with backgrounds in education, finance and the arts, as well as from the commitment and far-sightedness of its leadership. Members have a clear overview of the challenges which the school faces, as well as the ambitions which it holds. They are known in the school and visit occasionally to increase their understanding of its operation. The board maintains an active interest in matters of health of safety, while day-to-day responsibility is delegated to the school's committee. Governance provides effective and enthusiastic support for both the EYFS and the junior school, although some of the relevant policies are not routinely scrutinised. The board receives regular reports from senior staff and contributes to the monitoring and evaluation of the school's development planning. Induction training is helpful in providing new members of the board with a clear understanding of their role. Overall, the two levels of governance are complementary and generally successful in providing both support and challenge for the school.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.5 Within the EYFS, leadership and management provide a common vision for the future development of the setting. Some policies have recently been updated to reflect the most recent requirements. Following the recommendation from the previous inspection, a stronger emphasis on self-evaluation ensures that areas for development are quickly identified and that action is taken to improve them, for example in developing use of the outdoor play area. Educational programmes are regularly monitored. The setting is safe and welcoming. Careful appointment checks ensure that only suitably qualified adults, who update their training regularly, work with children. Declarations of disqualification by association have been made as required. Within the setting, performance is regularly monitored through a formal system of supervision and appraisal, and areas of professional development are identified. The setting actively promotes equality and diversity within the framework of British values.
- 5.6 The senior leadership team provides a clear vision and a well-articulated strategy for the educational direction of the school, firmly focused on meeting the individual needs of pupils. This is shared by all staff and has been highly effective both in

ensuring the provision of outstanding opportunities for pupils' personal development and in securing excellent levels of achievement. Leadership is thus highly effective in promoting the school's desire to provide a spirit of personal, moral and intellectual endeavour in line with the school's aims.

- 5.7 Senior leadership has a coherent approach to strategic planning, based on accurate self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The resulting development plan sets realistic objectives which are to be met over a three-year timescale, with thorough annual reviews of progress towards targets. The roles of the senior management team have been revised to ensure that all of the objectives of the development plan are met, including the provision of more support for middle managers. The effective restructuring of the team includes a specific responsibility for staff training and the development of stronger links with the community. The resource implications of the plan are clearly identified, so that it provides a useful tool for school improvement. Staff have contributed to the planning process and are fully supportive of the priorities which have been identified. Now that the move to the new building for the senior school has been completed, generous resources for staff training and time for consolidation are being provided to enable progress in meeting the goals which have been set.
- 5.8 In the junior school, an effective team of phase leaders work alongside senior leadership in successfully managing the school. An enthusiastic and committed group of subject leaders are responsible for the effective introduction and implementation of the integrated curriculum. The work of the senior school management team, with support from other working groups, is fostering a reflective approach to the improvement of standards of teaching, learning and pupils' personal development. Some of the new initiatives which have been launched are not yet fully embedded, leading to some inconsistencies in their implementation, for example in monitoring the departmental provision for the most able pupils and in an unevenness in the quality of marking across the various subject departments.
- 5.9 Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in greater use of monitoring and evaluation to further improve teaching; significant improvements have been made through a rolling programme of departmental reviews, lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work.
- 5.10 Pastoral leadership has a clear vision and ensures effective communication through regular meetings and thorough planning. It is outstanding in providing support for form tutors and other pastoral staff, whilst continuing to seek ways to provide the highest possible standards of pastoral care for pupils. This is reflected in the focus on individual pupils' needs within senior management meetings.
- 5.11 School management keeps under review the arrangements for the recruitment of staff and governors, together with making the necessary pre-employment checks. In a small number of cases the medical fitness checks of staff were not completed prior to appointment as required. Once alerted to these omissions the school took immediate action and, by the end of the inspection, all of the necessary checks had been made and were suitably recorded.
- 5.12 The whole school is successful in recruiting well-qualified and high-quality staff. A comprehensive and carefully targeted induction programme ensures that all staff feel valued and quickly learn the school's procedures and policies, including receiving effective safeguarding, welfare, health and safety training. In the junior and senior

schools a well-established appraisal system, incorporating peer review, is helpful in allowing reflection on current practice and in setting targets for improvement.

- 5.13 Pre-inspection questionnaire responses of parents of pupils throughout the school show that an overwhelming majority are positive about the education provided for their children. They praise the communication of school information and believe that their children feel safe and happy at school. A very small minority of parents commented adversely on the way in which concerns are handled, inspection evidence did not support this view; examination of detailed records of issues raised by parents concluded that these were answered in a timely fashion and in accordance with the school's complaints policy, which meets requirements.
- 5.14 In the EYFS the pre-inspection questionnaire responses and other inspection evidence, including interviews with parents, confirm that the setting also has strong links with parents. They are overwhelmingly positive about the support that their children receive and the care which is taken to make them feel at home when they start school, including the links with external agencies where these are required. Parents appreciate the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, including contributing to the online assessment system, volunteering to help on outings, and becoming involved in the parents' and teachers' association. Termly reports and regular teacher consultation evenings keep parents of children in the EYFS very well informed about the progress which their children are making against the Early Learning Goals.
- 5.15 The school maintains an extremely constructive relationship with parents. Parents comment very positively on the many channels of communication between school and home. Electronic means, including the use of social media, are implemented effectively and are reinforced by newsletters, a calendar, flyers for special events, and an 'open-door' policy for any issues parents wish to raise with staff.
- 5.16 Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's education and to support events, activities and outings. The junior school holds an annual open day where parents can celebrate the work of their children, and two parents' evenings are held annually. In Year 7 the introduction of parents' evenings has proved very popular, and pupils in the examination years are provided with two evenings each year at which to discuss progress. Additionally, parents throughout the school are invited to attend meetings to inform them about issues of potential concern, such as cyberbullying.
- 5.17 Parents have many opportunities to help in their children's work and development. They are also provided a wide range of information about the school and its work. The parents of new pupils in the junior school are invited to a welcoming party and parents comment that their children are known to the staff before their first term starts, and made to feel very welcome. In the senior school, new parents receive a comprehensive handbook dealing with all aspects of school life, and those with children in Years 9 and 11 are provided with extensive guidance on choosing GCSE and A-level subjects. The homework diary provides parents a further opportunity to monitor their children's work and to make comments, where necessary. Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with comprehensive information about the school, meeting requirements.
- 5.18 In the junior school, parents are provided with regular full reports about their children's progress. In the senior school these are reinforced with periodic progress reports relating to effort and attainment in each subject. The reports are concise and

honest, and include the setting of realistic targets for improvement. Parents comment that the reports are very helpful.

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