



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
CUMNOR HOUSE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Cumnor House School for Girls

Full Name of School	Cumnor House School for Girls
DfE Number	306/6107
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Head	Mr Peter Kelly
Chair of Governors	Mr Mark Seymour
Age Range	4 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	167
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	4 - 5 (EYFS): 22 5-11: 145
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 167
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Nicola Mearkle
EYFS Gender	Girls
Inspection Dates	02 Dec 2014 to 05 Dec 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. This is the school's first inspection by ISI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Mrs Paula Hobbs

Mrs Seona Rivett

Mrs Gillian Billbo

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Cumnor House School for Girls is a day school for girls from the ages of four to eleven years. The school occupies a site in Purley within the Webb Estate conservation area and was originally part of The Lodge, a co-educational school on the same site. The Cognita group took over management from the previous proprietors in 2010 and the school reopened under its present name in 2011. It has established close ties with Cumnor House School for Boys. The school is governed through Cognita head office located in Milton Keynes. An education executive acts as a school governor and meetings are held once a term. Since taking over the school, Cognita have completely refurbished the teaching accommodation and have provided a new science laboratory and food technology room. They have also invested in new information, communication and technology (ICT) equipment.
- 1.2 The school values the way in which all children are unique, and promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. It aims to encourage the development of a love of learning within a structured, broad and balanced curriculum and to develop self-esteem in each pupil, promoting a positive belief in her individual abilities. It strives to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects that enable the pupils to apply themselves with confidence, in order to provide as much choice as possible when selecting their senior school.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were one hundred and sixty seven pupils on roll. In the pre-prep (Reception to Year 2) there were eighty girls, of whom twenty two are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Many pupils enter Reception from the nearby Cumnor House Tree Tops Nursery. Pupils come mainly from local business and professional families and from a range of cultural backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the local population.
- 1.4 Standardised tests show that the ability profile of the school is above the national average. Pupils display a wide range of abilities, although most are of at least above average ability and some are well above average. Nine pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and eight of these receive learning support. Sixteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) of which nine receive support from the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 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 achievement of the pupils is excellent and successfully fulfils the school's aims. The pupils have a strong learning ethos, they are highly articulate, they listen carefully, the quality of their writing is of a high standard and the standard of their mathematics is exceptional. They are extremely well supported by excellent, well planned teaching. There is strong support for those with SEND and EAL; more able pupils are identified and given many opportunities to extend their learning. Pupils are very successful in their entry examinations to their senior schools and win a large number of academic and other scholarships. The curriculum is most effective in meeting the schools' aims. In both academic and creative subjects, a broad range of learning opportunities is provided, including competition in a range of sports. There is an excellent variety of extra-curricular activities available, which are well attended by the pupils. The quality of provision in the EYFS is excellent. By the end of Reception, many children exceed the expected levels of development in all areas of learning.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. At all ages, the pupils are self-confident and considerate. The pupils show great respect for those from other cultures, as well as for British heritage and tradition. There are warm relationships between pupils of all ages and the adults in the school, although opportunities to promote and strengthen pastoral care are sometimes missed. The quality of arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory. Although procedures in the school are carried out thoroughly, recruitment checks have not always been made correctly nor at the appropriate time. The buildings and grounds are well maintained.
- 2.3 Strong leadership and management ensure the commitment of the teaching staff and contribute greatly to the pupils high levels of achievement. Leadership in the EYFS is excellent and provides a warm and welcoming environment for the youngest pupils' work and play. Governance is unsatisfactory. Governors carry out their statutory annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures but have not always referenced this to current regulatory requirements, nor have they ensured that recruitment checks on staff are scrupulously followed before they begin work at the school. Governors discharge their responsibilities for financial planning well; there has been considerable investment in teaching accommodation and resources. The recently appointed educational executive, acting as chair of the governors, has limited opportunities to develop an understanding of the school, including the EYFS. Overall governance arrangements are currently being restructured in order to give greater cohesion. Parents comment favourably on almost all aspects of their relationship with the school and close links are maintained.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure all the required recruitment processes, including references, qualifications, barred list, prohibition orders, overseas and medical checks, are undertaken on staff before they begin work at the school [Part 4, paragraphs 19(2)(a), (b) (ii) (iii) and (d), and 19(3) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3 paragraphs 7 (a) and (b) under

Welfare, health and safety and EYFS regulations 3.9 and 3.10 under suitable people.]

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements:

1. Ensure that the governing body devises a robust system of monitoring compliance with regulatory requirements, including those of the EYFS.
2. Ensure that the governing body gains a fuller understanding of the school in order to set achievable challenges and provide suitable training.
3. Review the current pastoral procedures in order to embrace and embed good practice in all aspects of school life.
4. Incorporate learning opportunities in the outside area fully into every day planning 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 learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The pupils are well educated in accordance with the schools' aims. Their all-round achievement is based on high levels of knowledge, understanding and skill in both curricular and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They are articulate and listen carefully to each other, such as in a history lesson where pupils held an excited and reasoned discussion to deduce the origins of given artefacts. Pupils read with confidence and the quality of their written work is of a very high standard as is their presentation. In mathematics, their achievements are exceptional. They calculate accurately and investigate open ended problems with confidence, working independently and with enjoyment. Pupils have a firm grasp of scientific principles and articulate their ideas with assurance as they apply their scientific reasoning skills. The pupils' skills in ICT are good. Their creativity is expressed in a number of ways across the curriculum and there are numerous highly artistic displays of pupils' work around the school.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, rigorous planning of educational programmes ensures that most children reach and many exceed the expected levels of learning. Children make excellent progress relative to their ability and starting points. Children work comfortably with numbers to 20 and are able to match accurately the numbers on baubles with numbers on an advent calendar. Effective multi-sensory introduction of phonic sounds, supported by a structured writing programme, strongly promotes independent recording skills and the confidence to try to spell simple words is displayed, for example, in their moving tributes to the soldiers who died in the war and their recording of the visit from the firemen. Many children have progressed to reading simple books. They enjoy the challenge of creative work. They confidently use tablet computers as they take photographs to record their work on the beginning, middle and end of reading a story and they can control a mouse. Challenge cards for homework reinforce and extend their learning.
- 3.4 Many of the pupils are accomplished musicians and perform with confidence in the school choir, orchestra and chamber choir; they achieve excellent results in externally graded music examinations. Pupils have achieved success in local, regional and national sporting events. The art work is of a high standard and the pupils were recognised for excellence in this area in a national art competition. Individual successes have included winning the Surrey Girls Chess Championship League, representing Croydon in the London Youth Games and becoming a member of the Royal Academy of Music and the National Children's Orchestra. Pupils have won sport, art and music scholarships to independent senior schools.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured against performance in national tests but based on the evidence of pupil interviews, written work and lesson observation it is judged to be excellent in relation to national average expectations. Pupils have been successful in entrance examinations to selective independent and maintained schools.
- 3.6 All pupils make excellent progress. Pupils with SEND and EAL benefit from carefully tailored individual programmes that enable them to access and extend their learning within their subjects. The more able pupils are given extension tasks and challenges that help them to make rapid progress. They have won a number of academic scholarships to senior schools. Pupils' attitudes to work are excellent and support their achievements

well. They work well independently and are supportive of each other, consistently producing high quality work. They co-operate well and they clearly enjoy their learning.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum is well structured with subject allocation and coverage adjusted as the pupils progress up the school. It is broad and balanced with considerable depth and breadth within each subject, yet with flexibility in order to reflect the interests of the pupils. This contributes significantly both to the school successfully fulfilling its aims and to actively promoting fundamental British values. From Reception, all the national curriculum subjects are covered with the addition of French. Food technology is taught from Year 3. Useful curriculum links have been made with the boys' school to ensure consistency of provision within the group. The extensive games provision is enhanced by a number of after school sporting activities that contribute greatly to the pupils' considerable success in many arenas. Creative subjects including art, music and drama are well provided for.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, well-maintained and easily accessible resources promote child-initiated activities linked to topic work. A secure covered outdoor area for EYFS children provides a quiet area to play and relax and a range of wheeled toys promotes gross motor development. Activities planned between the two Reception classrooms increase children's choices; this planning, however, does not include the outside area. The curriculum is further enhanced by specialist teaching in physical education (PE), swimming and ballet.
- 3.10 Meticulous planning is evident across the school for all ages. Pupils with SEND and EAL and the more able have been identified and all staff are well informed of their capabilities. Lessons are extremely well planned with a variety of tasks that ensure that each individual pupil receives both the support and the challenge that she needs. Well informed learning support is most effectively provided through individual and small group tuition and through assistance in the classroom. Individual pupil passports inform and monitor the progress of those with SEND and EAL. More able pupils follow an extended curriculum and from Year 4 they work together in QUEST (questions, understanding, extending, solving, teamwork), an activity that gives opportunities for individual and whole school challenge. Younger pupils are selected to join OWLs (outstanding, wonderful, learners) where they too have the opportunity for extended learning.
- 3.11 Cross curricular initiatives are a key feature of subject planning and contribute greatly to pupils' enjoyment of their lessons and of the high standards that they achieve. In food technology, pupils use imaginative and descriptive language to explain the differences between the various breads that have they tasted. Personal, social, health and cultural education (PSHCE) is taught as a subject throughout the school and features in lessons, such as a discussion in drama on how it is natural to make mistakes.
- 3.12 A range of educational visits that are closely linked to the school curriculum offer additional experiences to the pupils. These include trips to museums, theatres and historical sites as well as opportunities for visits further afield such as the Year 5 trip to France. An excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities is on offer. These are much appreciated and well supported by the pupils. Activities range from sporting and musical opportunities, to intellectual challenge through chess and book club, and creative activities such as art and pottery. Links with the community are promoted through visits, such as to a local Temple, and there are close connections with the local church with

regular visits from the vicar. The local brownies and guide troops meet weekly at the school and many pupils are members.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, well informed teaching supports the school's aims and makes a strong contribution to the pupils' high levels of achievement. Carefully planned lessons identify and support pupils' different needs and provide stimulus and challenge. In the most successful lessons, excellent subject knowledge and good use of resources along with positive praise ensure that teaching encourages application and enables progress. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils were almost unanimous in saying that their teachers help them learn and all respondents agreed that they make good progress in their work.
- 3.15 In many lessons, teachers use a range of strategies and styles to interest pupils and foster their application. Time is given to develop thinking and reasoning skills, as when pupils were discussing the triple alliance and the triple entente in World War 1. On occasion, such opportunities were limited when teaching solely focused on recorded outcomes. Opportunities for cross curricular links are regularly made. Pupils wrote the story of Edward Jenner, having studied his achievements in science, and used drama to explore extreme weather systems.
- 3.16 In the EYFS, generous staffing provides for a high level of individual attention and enables flexible groupings in core subjects, thus fully addressing each child's needs. The use of a range of teaching methods ensures that each child can access the curriculum and helps to reinforce new teaching points. In mathematics, the use of songs and concrete objects successfully introduced the concept of subtraction as children helped Santa deliver his presents. A game to pair sounds on pegs with words on cards effectively reinforced the spelling of simple words. All EYFS staff are closely involved in development planning and actively embrace ideas to improve their practice, for example incorporating the use of the outdoor areas more fully into day-to-day planning and working with the boys' school to develop a creative curriculum based on fiction and non-fiction texts.
- 3.17 The school has an effective teaching and assessment policy that is closely followed by staff. Marking at its best identifies clear strengths whilst pointing out next steps for progress and future targets. Pupils are encouraged to self-evaluate and peer-evaluate both in their books and on classroom wall displays. Pupils confirmed at interview that this system of marking has a positive impact upon their learning. The school's programme of standardised assessments is most effectively used to identify levels of ability and to track pupils' progress. This informs teachers' planning to meet the needs of individuals. Excellent assistance is provided to meet the different needs of the children with SEND and EAL. In addition, extension activities are carefully planned for the most able within lessons along with additional opportunities offered by QUEST and OWLs. Pupils are challenged, for example, through philosophical inquiry-based games or 'quests' that the children create for their peers and their teachers. QUEST has recently introduced the Cumnor House record-breaking challenge, where all pupils are invited to set a school record in a variety of activities. Additional competition is offered in, for example, designing a new logo for the publicising of these events.
- 3.18 Ongoing assessment by all EYFS staff, maps individual progress against developmental and learning goals and identifies the next steps. Children's ideas and interests are taken

into account in planning future topics, for example, discussing whom to invite for the 'people who help us' topic. Moderation of work and inclusion in whole school curriculum planning is a strong feature, ensuring that requirements are fully met. An effective method of recording individual achievements provides a valuable overview of each child.

- 3.19 In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few parents expressed concerns over homework and over the provision for more able pupils and a few pupils felt they did not receive individual support. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views. On the contrary, they observed that the provision for more able pupils was excellent and that individual support at all ability levels was most effective.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils have a good sense of themselves; they are confident and self-aware. They are emotionally mature for their age and appreciate the feelings of others. They appreciate the abstract elements in life and show a strong aesthetic awareness and appreciation of the world around them. Art work, inspired by emotional responses to music, displayed honest and thoughtful interpretation. By the time pupils leave the school they have an excellent standard of personal development. They are articulate, honest and forthcoming.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, the children build strong and secure relationships with staff. Children enjoy responsibility, such as taking their turn to be monitors and confidently take the register to the office. They appreciate being part of the wider school environment, joining in enthusiastically with a song about healthy eating in assembly and celebrating their successes. Children from Reception are well prepared for the move to Year 1. Older girls act as excellent role models and enhance playtimes by being playground buddies to EYFS pupils.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They display a keen sense of right and wrong, and appreciate the need for the rule of law as they follow the values set out in the school's code of conduct, 'Cumnor Way'. Pupils show a strong moral sense when discussing issues relating to the past, showing empathy when discussing the impact of colonialisation in history. Pupils of all ages display a strong sense of fair play.
- 4.5 Pupils' social awareness is highly developed. Older pupils organise and run lunchtime clubs for younger year groups. Pupils also pair up with classmates who may need some support in lessons, which they do with great sensitivity. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that there was not enough opportunity to take responsibility. Inspection evidence did not support this view because pupils of all ages undertake responsible tasks in a number of ways, such as being a librarian or an eco monitor. Year 6 pupils work hard to achieve their 'steps to success' in order to gain prefect status. Pupils develop their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves with involvement in charitable events, many of which they initiate. Pupils sing carols at Christmas both in church and in the community, with the accompaniment of cakes that they have made and decorated themselves.
- 4.6 Pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is excellent. Within the multi-cultured mix of the school, there is a strong sense of respect for the traditions and values of different faiths and cultures. The choir has learnt a Christmas carol composed by a Japanese pupil for the end of term concert. Through cross-curricular enrichment, visitors to the school and the study of different religions, pupils show their wide understanding of the richness and opportunities of diversity. Pupils are balanced in their point of view; they are not partisan. Whether designing mobiles to celebrate the London Olympics, creating a concept for a plinth in Trafalgar Square or visiting the war memorial to place their poppies, they show a deep respect for British values, heritage and tradition.

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

- 4.7 The quality of contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.

- 4.8 The staff provide effective support for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims. Relationships are positive between staff and pupils, pupils know they can go to a member of staff if they need help or support. Form periods are occasionally used to address pastoral issues; however, this is not a regular feature of the daily routine. There is a strong sense of teamwork with pupils working and achieving together, such as in the orchestra and cross-country team events. Older pupils are happy to help their younger peers. Year 6 pupils feel strongly supported in their transition to senior school.
- 4.9 Through PE, science, personal, social, health and cultural education (PSHCE) and the excellent food technology curriculum there are ample opportunities for pupils to develop healthy eating habits and to take regular exercise. Any dietary requirements are carefully met by the kitchen. The school is aware of, and is actively addressing, the need to provide a more balanced range of food at lunchtime and to ensure that there is ample quantity for all lunch sittings. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.10 Children in the EYFS understand the need to wash their hands before lunch and the family service system ensures that the children eat a balanced lunch. They adeptly clear their own lunch trays and choose their dessert. Carefully structured and planned PE lessons develop gross motor skills and controlled risk taking, for example walking on the balance beam and learning to do backward rolls.
- 4.11 The school has effective systems to promote good behaviour amongst pupils and appropriate sanctions are used if needed. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils indicated that rewards and sanctions were not always fairly given. Some pupils and parents expressed concerns regarding the school's responses to bullying. From inspectors scrutiny of records, observation and discussion with pupils, no evidence was found to support these views. The PSHCE programme reinforces the expectations of good behaviour and pupils expressed confidence that any bullying would be dealt with appropriately.
- 4.12 A small minority of pupils indicated, in response to the questionnaire, that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. Inspectors found that the school is responsive to the views of pupils through the thriving school council, the members of which are justly proud of the initiatives they have brought in, such as playground equipment and charity days.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are unsatisfactory.
- 4.14 There has been considerable investment in the school buildings and grounds and these are maintained to a good standard. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and its procedures are effective and carefully followed. Thorough risk assessments and checks on equipment are carried out regularly and detailed records are maintained. Comprehensive fire prevention and safety policies are in place and fire drills take place at least termly. A fire risk assessment has been undertaken and all recommendations followed. Daily risk assessments of EYFS classrooms and outside areas, supervising the children at all times and strict adherence to the security of the buildings ensure the children's safety on site.
- 4.15 Throughout the school, procedures for safeguarding pupils are understood. A recent review now ensures that these clearly follow current statutory guidance. Older pupils are made aware of the potential dangers of inappropriate internet use and there is a rigorous code of conduct for staff. Designated staff have received suitable safeguarding training

from the local authority and all staff receive child protection training regularly. However, recruitment procedures have not always been rigorously followed with the necessary checks being undertaken on all relevant personnel, nor have these always been undertaken before appointment.

- 4.16 The admissions and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for pupils with SEND, and for those who are injured or become unwell at school. Many staff are trained in first aid and pupils' medical needs are fully met. Medicines are stored securely and staff are kept well informed over pupils with various medical conditions. Any accidents or injuries are recorded and parents are kept informed.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is unsatisfactory
- 5.2 Governance, through Cognita, discharges its responsibilities for financial planning well and since the establishment of the school has made considerable investment in teaching accommodation and resources. They have established useful links with the other Cumnor House Schools, thus establishing an educational community in the local area. The main Cognita office provides a range of specialist officers who give valuable support to senior management of the school. There is rigorous monitoring of educational standards and an annual appraisal of the work of the head. These successfully support the aims of the school and inform the comprehensive school development plan.
- 5.3 The recently appointed educational executive, acting as chair of the governors, visits at least termly to gain insight into the working of the school and to provide constructive support for the head. However, further opportunities for governance to become familiar with the staff and daily routines, including the EYFS, are limited. The termly meetings include a full report from leadership but there is little subsequent discussion with the school on matters arising. Future direction and considerable challenges are set from Cognita head office but with limited reference as to how these may be realistically achieved. Governance arrangements are currently being restructured in order to give greater cohesion.
- 5.4 The governing body have not fulfilled their statutory duties for safeguarding as they have not had due regard to current statutory guidance for child protection and for staff recruitment in their policies nor in their annual review. Recruitment procedures undertaken by the head office have not been sufficiently rigorous. These processes are currently being reviewed.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.6 Since the establishment of the school, leadership and management have been most effective in embedding the core aims of academic attainment through a love of learning into the school community. The excellent achievement of the pupils with their strong learning ethos bear testament to their success. Dedicated and inspirational leadership has ensured the commitment of the teaching staff to embrace new initiatives and focus on achieving the best educational outcomes for their pupils. Excellent day-to-day management of the EYFS provides a warm and welcoming environment for work and play within a secure site. Educational provision in the EYFS is effectively monitored, staff have appropriate supervision and opportunities for continuous professional development.
- 5.7 Responsibility for policies that follow statutory guidance is undertaken by the governing body, and management has responsibility for their implementation. Welfare, health and safety within the school is to a high standard with risk assessments, escape routes and safety procedures clearly displayed. All staff have received statutory training in safeguarding and relevant staff in health and safety procedures, including first aid. There

has, however, been a lack of monitoring of some aspects of the recruitment process with reference to current statutory guidance.

- 5.8 Leadership is committed to pupils achieving a successful transfer to their next school, not only through their academic achievements but also through an understanding of the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions. A focus by management on the development of pupils' personal qualities such as respect, kindness and care for others is evident. The continuing process of monitoring and reviewing academic policies, including assessment and marking, throughout the school is a significant factor in maintaining effective teaching. Annual staff appraisals set realistic targets, although further professional development through training is not a regular feature. Constant review by leadership and management of their own procedures and the ability to take swift action when necessary is a strong contributor to the overall success of the school.
- 5.9 The leadership team is currently being restructured in order to strengthen the management of the core subjects. There is recognition of a changing curriculum and consideration is being given to the best delivery of this, as well as to the most appropriate resources. There is also acknowledgment of the need for strong pastoral leadership, although this is not currently being reflected by a consistent approach to pastoral matters. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the very large majority of parents feel that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.10 The school promotes excellent links with parents. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, for example talking to the children about special festivals and a visit from a new baby in the Reception class. They are invited to parents' assemblies and to the plays and concerts performed by each year group. All parents are automatically members of the parents' association which organizes social events and fundraising activities. Funds are used to supply extras for the school, such as the adventure trail, the climbing wall, the sensory garden at the front of the school and the kitchen garden where the girls grow their own produce for cooking in food technology.
- 5.11 In the questionnaire, almost all parents expressed their satisfaction at the information they received about the school and timely responses to their questions. A large majority agreed that the school encouraged them to be involved in its life and work. A few parents were not satisfied with the information they received on their children's progress and the manner in which the school handled concerns. However, the overall response was small and inspectors found no evidence for these views. Reports on progress are detailed. The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. Open discussions at meetings of class representatives provide direct feedback to the school of any general concerns. Individual parental concerns are promptly addressed and handled with care.
- 5.12 Parents have regular opportunities to view their daughter's work at 'pop-in sessions' and appreciate the school's flexibility to accommodate the needs of working parents, for example, the provision of an after school club. The open door policy ensures that swift contact can be made with staff. Information evenings, held in the autumn term, inform parents about the curriculum for the coming year.
- 5.13 In the autumn and spring terms, formal opportunities to discuss their daughter's progress are provided in the form of parents' evenings and certificates appropriate to the girls' stage in the school provide grades for subjects, and include constructive targets in numeracy and literacy. The written report in the summer term provides a detailed summary of pupils' progress and achievements in each subject and includes appropriate assessment results. Parents of Reception children additionally receive their child's EYFS profile results and are invited to a meeting to discuss these.

- 5.14 Regular newsletters, an informative prospectus, the parents' handbook and the school website provide helpful information about the work of the school for both current and prospective parents. Email messages to the school office are efficiently directed to the appropriate recipient and text messages provide an efficient link to send important updates to all parents. In interviews, parents expressed their appreciation of the school's ability to identify each girl's strengths, to teach them to think for themselves and to prepare them for the future.

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