



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**St Nicholas School**

**October 2018**



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### School's Details

|                                 |  |    |                   |
|---------------------------------|--|----|-------------------|
| <b>School College</b>           | St Nicholas School   |    |                   |
| <b>DfE number</b>               | 304/6059   |    |                   |
| <b>EYFS registered number</b>   | EY483622   |    |                   |
| <b>Address</b>                  | St Nicholas School<br>22 Salmon Street<br>Kingsbury<br>London<br>NW9 8PN |    |                   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>         | 020 8205 7153  |    |                   |
| <b>Email address</b>            | head@stnicholasschool.org.uk   |    |                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>              | Mr Matt Donaldson  |    |                   |
| <b>Proprietor</b>               | Inspired Learning Group (UK) Limited                                     |    |                   |
| <b>Age range</b>                | 0 to 11  |    |                   |
| <b>Number of pupils on roll</b> | 31   |    |                   |
|                                 | <b>Boys</b>  | 13 | <b>Girls</b> 18   |
|                                 | <b>EYFS</b>  | 5  | <b>Juniors</b> 26 |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>         | 16 to 18 October 2018  |    |                   |

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 St Nicholas School is a proprietorial day school for boys and girls aged between 0 and 11. The school is now owned by the Inspired Learning Group (UK) Limited. It was founded in 1937 in a converted detached house in Kingsbury. These premises have been extended over time to accommodate increased teaching and learning space. Pupils aged 4 to 11 attend during term time only. Children from the ages of 0 to 3, in the Nursery section, can attend for 51 weeks of the year. The proprietor and the company's management team are responsible for the operational management of the school.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school appointed a new head, who took up post in September 2017.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 The school seeks to provide an all-round education for pupils in a safe and nurturing environment and provide opportunities to develop social and personal skills. The school aims to develop life skills that facilitate success at senior school and beyond, and to provide an exciting curriculum aimed towards supporting successful applications to senior schools, whilst encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their learning.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils mainly come from families with professional parents, whose cultural backgrounds reflect the local area. Data provided by the school indicate the pupil's ability is broadly above average. The school has identified no pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Hence, no pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan. Staff have identified three pupils who require additional support with their work. English is an additional language for seven pupils, two of whom receive support from the school.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. In addition, the standards relating to premises and accommodation are also included. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 The school ensures that good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 Arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils do not pay due regard to current statutory guidance. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has not undergone relevant updated training in line with the school's published policy. The school has not always sought advice from external agencies when appropriate and has not liaised with the destination schools of leavers over safeguarding concerns.
- 2.9 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 6, and 9 to 16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met but those in paragraph 7 (a) and (b) [safeguarding] are not met.**

#### Action point 1

- the school must ensure that staff with designated safeguarding responsibility undertake child protection training in line with the local safeguarding children's board inter-agency working protocols [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

#### Action point 2

- the school must ensure that it correctly implements the liaison procedures described in its safeguarding policy [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

#### **PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

#### **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

#### **PART 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.
- 2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

#### **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

- 2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

#### **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 2.18 The proprietor does not ensure that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.19 The proprietor has ensured that there are arrangements in place to review the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. However, the review has lacked challenge, and consequently has not identified shortcomings in the implementation of the school's safeguarding policy with regard to training and to appropriate liaison with other agencies and institutions.
- 2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.**

### **Action point 3**

- **the school must ensure that leadership and management acquire the good skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the Independent School Standards are met consistently, and pupils' well-being is actively promoted. In particular, it must ensure that the review of safeguarding is sufficiently challenging to identify shortcomings in the implementation of arrangements outlined in the school's policy [paragraph 34 (1)(a), (b) and (c)].**

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS PROVISION**

- 2.21 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision requires improvement.
- 2.22 The setting meets the needs of the children, including those with particular needs. The provision of a stimulating learning environment together with a secure understanding of the expected developmental milestones of young children ensures that they all make good progress relative to their starting points.
- 2.23 The collaborative team are committed to ensuring the children are happy and enjoy their learning. Babies feel safe and secure and the effective focus on their personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the setting. The evaluative approach to practice is successful in creating a culture of continuous improvement.
- 2.24 The requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are not fully met. Whilst all staff have up to date online safeguarding training, it is not in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). Following a scrutiny of accident records that take place outside school, the inspection found that there are no clear mechanisms in place to ensure staff respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse. Inspectors judged this did not have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of children.

### **EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- 2.25 The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement.
- 2.26 Staff in the setting are well qualified and highly motivated. They work effectively together to ensure high standards of provision and care. As a result, children enjoy their time in the Nursery. The continuous evaluation of day to day provision ensures they have a positive learning experience which supports their development. For example, the creation of a snack bar in the Nursery rooms enables children to access snacks at any time, which has served to minimise disruption to other activities and promote children's independence. The Nursery also takes advantage of the support offered from the local authority for early years settings. This has contributed to the effective evaluation of practice and the good quality provision observed in the inspection. Parental involvement is valued and communication between home and school is good.
- 2.27 Systems are in place for both staff supervision and appraisal, however there is a misunderstanding regarding their different purposes. It is not fully understood that welfare of children should be the focus of supervision. Staff welcome the opportunities available for further professional training and have the support of senior managers.
- 2.28 Key persons monitor children's progress through careful observation of their needs and interests. When babies join the setting, parents contribute detailed information about their child's experience and needs. This gives continuity of care and ensures children have learning opportunities that they enjoy whilst exploring new activities and resources.
- 2.29 The careful planning of children's learning alongside consideration of their interests ensures that the developmental needs of each child are met. Daily evaluation sheets of the key activities provided carefully track the engagement and involvement of the children and support the identification of appropriate next steps in their learning.

- 2.30 Equality and diversity are actively promoted within the setting. All children have access to the wide range of activities, resources and experiences that are on offer and they are well matched to a child's level of development. At the time of the inspection the setting was focusing on Black History month and all children had the opportunity to explore the shape, size, texture and taste of plantain and sweet potatoes.
- 2.31 The behaviour of the children is a strength of the setting. Staff have a high level of interaction with the babies and toddlers and steer their actions in the right direction where necessary. Commentary on children's actions is used effectively to engage children and to make them more aware of one another.
- 2.32 There is a good emphasis on the promotion of British values. Throughout the setting children are encouraged to listen to one another, to share and to take turns. In the baby room they have many opportunities to make choices when selecting activities and exploring materials. They are encouraged to think about the needs of others at sleep time and when selecting snacks. A prominent photo display shows children tidying up, co-operating, making choices and listening to one another.
- 2.33 Arrangements are in place to protect children. All staff have up to date online safeguarding training. However, this is not in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSCB. Several members of staff have paediatric first aid training. A medicine log is completed for children taking medication and appropriate accident records for internal accidents are in place. Scrutiny of external accident forms revealed that there are no clear mechanisms in place to ensure staff respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse. However, these issues do not have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of children, as staff have responded appropriately in recent cases.

### **QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

- 2.34 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 2.35 Staff are very aware of the individual needs and level of development of each child. They have high expectations, particularly in terms of developing children's independence and confidence so that they are able to fully explore and investigate their surroundings. Gentle questioning and encouragement when children are selecting activities sustains interest and engagement. Children listening to familiar songs emanating from a small keyboard were encouraged to move to the music. They showed obvious enjoyment as they gently swayed backwards and forwards watching one another as they did so. Photographic displays in the setting show children enjoying their learning in a range of indoor and outside activities. Torchlight proved a huge fascination for some, whilst the properties of shredded paper excited others.
- 2.36 There are many opportunities for children to investigate and explore materials and to become involved and absorbed in their chosen activities. Children in the baby room were seen tipping jelly out of small containers by tapping and squeezing. Supportive interventions from adults using descriptive language relating to the feeling, texture and movement of the jelly secured the children's interest and involvement. A reticent baby was encouraged to try, and showed his excitement and enjoyment by babbling a response when he squeezed the jelly.
- 2.37 The assessment of children's development is given high priority. Each child has a progress check to which parents contribute at the end of a six-week settling in period. An online learning diary is shared between the setting and home and informal conversations when children are handed over to the care of their key person are also opportunities for parents to contribute to the assessment of what children know and can do.
- 2.38 Good quality teaching effectively supports children's development and learning. Very young children are beginning to make conversational sounds when responding to the questioning of adults and some show high levels of concentration. A tray of leaves alongside an empty plastic jar sparked the interest of a very young child who was engrossed for several minutes repeatedly removing the lid and placing leaves inside before tipping it upside down to empty them out again.

- 2.39 There is good communication with parents. A weekly newsletter which includes photographs showing some of the experiences and activities children have enjoyed gives parents a good insight into their child's learning. Discussion with a large group of parents during the course of the inspection evidenced that they welcome initiatives such as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum evening. The communication with staff about their child's progress including the daily home school record used in the baby room, the daily contact at handover time and the speedy response to emails and queries about all aspects of their child's welfare, development and progress is also valued.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE**

- 2.40 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children requires improvement.
- 2.41 Adults are good role models, encouraging the children to listen to one another, share toys, and express their needs. A positive, happy environment is reflected in children who are smiling, attentive, and interested in all that is going on around them. A very young child in the baby room on finding a pair of shoes took great delight in trying to put them on the feet another child who was sleeping.
- 2.42 Young children become increasingly aware of one another as they engage in shared activities, and sit down together at mealtimes. One toddler ran excitedly to greet another child who had awoken from a long sleep, squealing with delight as they threw their arms around them. Children enjoy their time outdoors in a stimulating environment which replicates indoor provision in that there are activities to promote children's' development across all areas of learning.
- 2.43 Arrangements for transitions within the setting are very well managed and parents are informed that transition activities are going to take place. Several weeks before their second birthday children are introduced to their new keyworker in the toddler room. When they are judged to be sufficiently confident a transition document is signed to show that the child is socially and emotionally prepared to make the move.
- 2.44 The 'My Family' board in the baby room is used effectively to help children feel secure providing a good focus for talking about life at home with their family. Opportunities to move around freely develops children's confidence and gives them time to observe one another and process their feelings before making choices about which activities or resources to select. Good behaviour was observed throughout the setting in many different contexts including listening to stories, preparing to go outside and snack times.
- 2.45 Practices throughout the Nursery contribute to the development of healthy lifestyles. There is a good focus on the importance of good eating habits. Each child has their own water cup, to which they point when thirsty. They enjoy healthy snacks of fruit and bread sticks and feed themselves independently. A diary giving details of the food and drink the child has consumed goes home to parents and carers each day.
- 2.46 There are many strengths in the provision. However, there are also weaknesses with staff safeguarding training. These do not have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of children.

## **OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN**

- 2.47 Outcomes for children are good.
- 2.48 By the end of the EYFS, children have made at least expected progress in their learning and development and some exceed it. Assessments carried out shortly after children's entry to the setting identify appropriate starting points for each child and their progress is reviewed at regular intervals.
- 2.49 Children under two make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They display high levels of independence and a positive approach to learning. Occasions such as snack times, mealtimes and when listening to music and songs reflect children's rapidly developing social skills and their enjoyment of learning.

2.50 The focus on the development of secure relationships and the provision of a stimulating learning environment are effective in ensuring that the children are motivated and curious about the world around them and therefore well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

2.51 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 fully, those responsible for the registered provision must take the following action.

#### **ACTION POINTS FOR EYFS**

- the school must ensure that they implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children, which are in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSCB, with particular focus on training requirements [EYFS 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7].
- The lead practitioner should liaise with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSCB and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect [EYFS 3.5 and 3.7].

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT**

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years:

- Clarify the role of supervision in ensuring the monitoring of children's welfare.

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

## Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is sound.

- Achievement of pupils is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils' achievement is broadly in line with the school's aims.
- Most able pupils concentrate well and are identifiable by the quality of their answers, but their own questioning is limited in scope.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive overall; they are usually enthusiastic in individual work and in collaboration with others, but their learning is not consistently productive.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is sound.

- Pupils understand and respect systems of rules and laws, and most accept responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others.
- Pupils collaborate well when given the opportunity and support each other in achieving common goals.
- Pupils are starting to develop self-awareness and independence in response to the school's recent focus on core values, but they show little initiative in their learning beyond that suggested by teachers.
- Pupils enthusiastically promote understanding of their own and other cultures and are inclusive of those from backgrounds different to their own, mixing easily with pupils of other faiths and backgrounds.

## Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Apply the recent learning skills initiatives consistently across all areas of the curriculum, so that pupils increase the extent of independence and initiative in their learning.
- Develop and embed the more formal assessment and tracking systems recently introduced, to address inconsistencies in the level of pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding across different groups.
- Leadership and management should implement further ways to ensure that pupils develop their own willingness to take responsibility for their decisions and actions.

## The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is sound.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve broadly in line with the school's aims of supporting successful senior and grammar school applications. In recent years, pupils have achieved entry to a range of senior schools. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests. The school's own assessments show that pupils abilities on entry are broadly above average, and that the progress of different groups is inconsistent, particularly for those the school identifies as its most able pupils and those identified as needing additional support. This picture is confirmed by the observation of pupils' performance in lessons, where most make short-term progress appropriate in relation to that expected for their age. Opportunities for the most able pupils and those pupils identified as requiring intervention to make progress commensurate with their ability was limited by the learning tasks. Pupils' progress is constrained because the analysis of available data is not yet rigorous. Pupil's academic achievements are appropriate for their age and they enjoy success in extra-curricular activities. Pupils' group and individual achievements in activities such as music, games and clubs is likewise typical for their age; in some areas achievement, is good but this is not reflected consistently throughout the pupil body. For example, pupils identified as requiring support demonstrated little understanding of the grammar being taught. Pupils rarely show willingness to take initiative for their own learning, for example in following their own interests without prompt from teachers.
- 3.6 The pupils' basic skills are secure in most areas of learning and are in line with their ability and age. Linguistic skills seen in a modern foreign language lessons were well developed and pupils were confident in discussing picture cards of equipment and linking them to the subjects taught in school. In lessons pupils showed some understanding of a scientific approach and use of specific language. Pupils were made aware of the adaptations that plants can make to survive in different environments but when required to design a plant which would be suitable to their chosen conditions, few were able to explain how the plant adaptations would support survival. Opportunities for scientific enquiry were not evident in work scrutiny or through pupil interviews. In lessons offering greater challenge older pupils demonstrated, for example, that they understood the cause and effect of small environmental variations on global warming. Sophisticated discussion demonstrated their confident understanding of fossil fuels and the impact of carbon dioxide on the ozone layer.
- 3.7 The few examples of creative writing seen were appropriate for pupils' ages but were limited in extent by opportunities to use the full range of genres. Pupils develop good creative skills through the weekly speech and drama and music lessons, although pupils' aesthetic skills are less well developed. Little evidence was seen in work scrutiny, and through discussions with pupils, for the opportunity of the development of aesthetic skills, however pupils spoke positively about the opportunity for using design and drawing skills to embellish a display on Ancient Greece. In the EYFS most pupils successfully develop basic skills in all of the areas of learning and the most able pupils were able to acquire strong communications and language skills. In a free-choice activity children in the EYFS chose to share a book and used their growing knowledge of the sounds that words make to competently decode the words. Children in the EYFS with less developed communication skills made less progress, because they were offered fewer targeted opportunities to develop their verbal communication.
- 3.8 Pupils' numerical skills are appropriate to their age. Pupils recall relevant information efficiently and there are some links between different areas of study. On the evidence of the work scrutiny and lessons even the most able pupils are working only at a level expected at their age. There is little progression because of limited opportunities for challenge. More able pupils made limited progress as they continued to complete basic questions when already proven their understanding. For example, the most able pupils repeated arithmetic problems that did not increase in challenge despite the pupils getting them all correct. Highly motivational activities in the EYFS enabled children to develop an understanding of numbers to 20 and apply to their understanding of days, weeks and months. Pupils use basic information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively and some links are made across other areas of study. Some good use of mobile devices was seen by pupils, such as in producing

art in the style of Mondrian. However, there were few applications or other ICT skills observed in other areas of learning.

- 3.9 Pupils draw knowledge effectively from sources to which they have been directed and are attentive in lessons, though often they are very reliant on teachers to provoke questions. They display a level of study skills appropriate for their age. Pupils recall relevant information efficiently and can make essential links with other areas of study. Most able pupils concentrate well and are identifiable by the quality of their answers but their own questioning is limited in scope. Following discussions with staff they found it difficult to identify any examples of work instigated by pupils rather than teachers. Pupils' knowledge of historical vocabulary, chronology, primary or secondary sources is not well developed. For example, pupils demonstrated a basic understanding of the events of the First World War but were unclear about the reliability of sources, despite a teaching focus on this area.
- 3.10 Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive; they are usually enthusiastic in individual work and in collaboration with others, but their learning is not consistently productive. Pupils consider themselves to be very hard working, are focussed and demonstrate a positive attitude to their work even when opportunity limits their participation through lack of collaboration or independence. A debating activity was observed, where pupils worked together successfully to identify responses for arguments both for and against a choice of alternate sources of energy in the school. Pupils were observed to independently complete directed tasks set but teaching provided few opportunities for pupils to take leadership over their own learning. In the most successful lessons observed, pupils made excellent progress in the lesson by working in groups but independently on activities designed to match their ability.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.11 The quality of the pupils' personal development is sound.
- 3.12 Pupils show appropriate levels of self-understanding for their age. They are not naturally self-reflective but react positively when required, through discussions about their strengths and weaknesses. Most parents agreed that the school meets its aims of providing opportunities to develop social and personal skills, or encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils and parents in their questionnaire responses are aware of the introduction of core values and learning approaches, but few pupils show a clear understanding of the vocabulary and hence have yet to independently relate these to their own learning, behaviours and decision making. A video of a residential trip showed pupils being made aware of how the values related to their activities, but in questionnaires and discussion they displayed confusion about their relevance. Pupils understand that the recently introduced self-reflection sheets provide an opportunity for them to consider how they can improve both learning and behaviour, and these are most effective when pupils are encouraged to use vocabulary which is appropriate to their own understanding and age.
- 3.13 Pupils appreciate non-material aspects of life, and on occasions show aesthetic and cultural awareness. Such appreciation and awareness are evident in the pupils' demeanour. With encouragement, pupils reflect on spiritual dimensions of human existence. In interviews pupils expressed their appreciation of and the love they feel for their families; they discussed the value of friendships across cultural backgrounds and recognised that their friends have different experiences and values but that these are not barriers to successful relationships. Opportunities to develop aesthetic awareness were limited to opportunities in the curriculum, but pupils expressed an appreciation of the work when encouraged, for example recognising and appreciating the use of colour in Picassos' paintings. Meditation in assembly is recognised by some pupils as an opportunity to stop and be thankful and for others an opportunity to think about the homework for the week.

- 3.14 Pupils can defend the values they espouse and enjoy, whether in lessons, extra-curricular activities or school council. They show a keen sense of fair play and most pupils are well behaved. They understand and respect systems of rules and laws, and most accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils playing a drama game showed they all understood the rules and reacted appropriately when they were put out and pupils' good relationships with staff ensure that they would report poor behaviour. Pupils accept the core values of the school but do not yet fully grasp what it means to take responsibility for their own actions; and reference back to adults having stipulated the rules and the consequences.
- 3.15 Pupils usually challenge unkindness when they encounter it, and show little tolerance for bullying. In interviews and questionnaires, the absence of bullying is evident. In some lessons pupils challenged the misbehaviour and inattentiveness of other pupils, but in other lessons they accepted without action inappropriate behaviour. In interviews, some pupils were clear about how to disagree politely with others. Most pupils appreciate that they can have their own opinions but must be mindful of other's feelings when they disagree. Pupils form productive relationships with each other and play cooperatively in the playground across year groups. They collaborate well and support each other in communal enterprises, achieving common goals. They have enjoyed the recently started football team and value the opportunity to be part of a team.
- 3.16 Those with responsibilities fulfil these with some success; they take effective action where required, and are respected by other pupils. In interviews the pupils were confident that if they saw something that concerned them that they could tell the head boy or girl. In interviews, pupils said they are not always confident of being able to report concerns at the time of an incident. Older pupils show concern and support for those younger or new to the school. In this small setting the pupils know each other well and this is evident by the interactions in the playground. Pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and respond to opportunities to support them. Pupils have the opportunity to be involved in activities instigated by the school that benefit others, within school, in local communities or through charitable enterprises, but none were identified as being initiated by ideas from pupils themselves.
- 3.17 Pupils are inclusive of those from backgrounds different to their own, mixing easily with pupils of other nationalities, backgrounds and beliefs in this diverse setting. This is an understated strength of the school which could be encouraged in further developing the mutually supportive school community at times other than religious festivals. They have an awareness of fundamental British values, such as those characterised by the democratic process, and of public institutions and services. By choosing the country with which to establish a 'toilet-twinning' partnership, pupils showed their understanding of the democratic process. Visiting speakers from the police, fire service and Transport for London have been welcomed to the school and the pupils undertook a project to plan and carry out a journey across London using public transport.
- 3.18 Pupils know how to stay safe and understand how to be physically and mentally healthy particularly in terms of recognising a healthy diet and the need for exercise. They also explained that they had some training on how to stay safe online during assemblies. Pupils in interviews appreciated mindfulness club and there was evidence that some pupils valued the recently introduced time for meditation which enabled them to reflect on things they were thankful for and decisions they could make.

#### **4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

#### **Inspectors**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Mrs Tracy Handford | Reporting inspector                                   |
| Mr Jeremy Gibson   | Compliance team inspector (Former bursar, GSA school) |
| Mrs Susan La Farge | Team inspector (Head, ISA school)                     |
| Mrs Kathryn Henry  | Co-ordinating inspector for early years               |