



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
BOLTON SCHOOL GIRLS' DIVISION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Bolton School Girls' Division

Full Name of School	Bolton School Girls' Division
DfE Number	350/6015
EYFS Number	315995
Registered Charity Number	526618
Address	Bolton School Girls' Division Chorley New Road Bolton Lancashire BL1 4PB England
Telephone Number	01204 840201
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Email Address	shincks@boltonschool.org.uk
Headmistress	Miss Sue Hincks
Chairman of Governors	Mr Mike Griffiths
Age Range	0 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	1389
Gender of Pupils	Boys and Girls to Year 2; Girls in Years 3 to 13
Numbers by Age	0-1 (EYFS): 31 5-11: 326 2-5 (EYFS): 164 11-18: 868
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Tracey Taylor
EYFS Gender	Boys and Girls
Inspection Dates	02 Feb 2016 to 05 Feb 2016

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. 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 standard inspection was in March 2010 and the previous ISI EYFS intermediate inspection was in May 2013.

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 and with the chairman of governors and other 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

Mr George Fisher	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Johnson	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mrs Kathy Crewe-Read	Team Inspector (Headteacher, HMC school)
Mr Steve Fox	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Thomas Garnier	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Andrew Johnson	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Robert Lilley	Team Inspector (Head, HMC junior school)
Mr Joe McKinney	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Martin Morris	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC junior and IAPS school)
Mr Gary Wright	Team Inspector (Headmaster, GSA school)
Miss Jacqueline Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Bolton School Foundation is a charity, endowed by Sir William Lever Hesketh in 1913, and comprises boys' and girls' divisions which share the same site on the outskirts of Bolton, a town in west Lancashire. A single governing body oversees both divisions, with each of the two vice chairmen taking particular responsibility for one of the divisions.
- 1.2 The girls' division, for pupils from 0 to 18, includes boys up to the age of five, within the Nursery and in the adjoining infants' school, Beech House. The junior school, Hesketh House, educates girls from the ages of 7 to 11. The headmistress of the senior school has overall responsibility for the girls' division. Beech House, Hesketh House and the senior school each has its own head but both report to the headmistress of the senior school. The head of Beech House also has responsibility for the EYFS, including 'Kidzone', which provides pre- and after-school care for children up to the age of 13 in a separate building next to the Nursery.
- 1.3 The aims of the school are to realise the potential of each pupil, by providing challenge, encouraging initiative, promoting teamwork and developing leadership capabilities through a rich and stimulating educational experience, and a supportive and industrious learning environment.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, new heads of all three component schools have been appointed. Additionally, the junior school moved to its own, purpose-built building. Within the senior school a new drama and dance studio has been developed, and a refurbished dining hall and Year 11 common room. A new sixth-form centre has also been built as a shared facility with the boys' division.
- 1.5 In the EYFS at the time of the inspection there were 195 children, 89 girls and 106 boys. Of these, 31 children are under the age of two, and 63 children are in the Reception class in Beech House which also accommodates 146 pupils in Years 1 and 2, 77 boys and 69 girls. There were 180 pupils in Hesketh House, in Years 3 to 6. In the senior school, there were 868 pupils, aged 11 to 18, including 212 in the sixth form, Years 12 and 13.
- 1.6 The ability profile for pupils in the junior and senior schools is above average. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage. Around a third come from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Most pupils are from families with professional and business backgrounds. Sixty pupils require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has an education, health and care plan, but two have a statement of special educational needs. Of those requiring additional support, the majority have some form of dyslexia. One pupil requires support for speaking English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.7 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 meeting its aim to realise the potential of each pupil. The quality of pupils' achievement and learning is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils have an exemplary attitude to learning, apply their skills confidently and achieve high academic standards. Pupils make good progress, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able. The outcomes for children in the EYFS are outstanding and children make excellent progress. Pupils work well together and individually, and are very successful in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music, drama and games. They also make an outstanding contribution to their local community through an extensive volunteering scheme. The curriculum is excellent and comprehensive. Nursery children benefit from nature days which have been introduced but there are limited opportunities for older children within the EYFS to take part in woodland learning. The quality of teaching is excellent, an improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned and teaching is enthusiastic and benefits from outstanding subject knowledge. Pupils benefit from regular and detailed feedback on their work, and demonstrate a willingness to take intellectual risks in lessons. The more able are suitably challenged and feel well supported. Thus, the recommendations following the previous inspection have all been met.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. They are self-assured, purposeful and mutually supportive. They show tolerance and maturity, underpinned by strong personal values. Pupils readily accept responsibility and assume a variety of leadership roles. Their behaviour is exemplary. The pastoral care is excellent at all stages within the school, and relationships between pupils and staff are strongly positive. In the EYFS, the personal development and behaviour of children is outstanding and staff successfully promote a culture of mutual respect and love for learning. Arrangements for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent but the quality of record-keeping is not consistently high across the school.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. There is strong oversight of the school, and a clearly articulated vision for its development. Governance fully meets its statutory responsibilities, and there is excellent communication between the committees, and with the various sections of the school. It provides strong support for all sections of the school including the EYFS. Leadership and management are excellent. Senior leadership is highly effective in ensuring that all staff feel valued, and that the development plan for the school is understood, monitored thoroughly and evaluated regularly. In the EYFS, improved and highly effective planning across the setting meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. Parents are highly satisfied, reflected in their very positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

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) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure the quality of record keeping, within matters relating to welfare, health and safety, is consistently high across the school.
2. Implement the current plans to extend the woodland learning programme within 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 pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim to realise the potential of each pupil. Pupils throughout the school are highly articulate and, as they mature, become increasingly adept at discussing complex ideas. They have strong listening skills, evident within their own and foreign languages. Reading and literacy are developed well in Years 1 to 6 and, by the time they are in the senior school, pupils can write accurately, fluently and in a range of styles. Pupils apply mathematical skills confidently within science. Pupils have excellent skills in information and communication technology (ICT). They make competent use of tablet computers for research, including in Years 4 to 6. Pupils display logical thought, for example in computer programming for younger pupils, and in the structuring of extended essays in the sixth form. They show high levels of creativity in a range of subjects. They develop strong physical skills within both the curricular and extra-curricular programmes.
- 3.3 In Years 1 to 6, excellent standards of achievement are demonstrated within music and drama. Netball and swimming teams perform to high standards and chess players compete at national levels. There are notable successes in speaking and listening examinations. In the senior school, pupils are successful in national science Olympiad competitions. Pupils perform with distinction in a range of musical ensembles, and results in individual music examinations are excellent. They compete regionally and nationally in both lacrosse and netball, as well as representing their highly successful school teams. Pupils' levels of participation in volunteering are exceptional, with the school having achieved national recognition.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 cannot be compared to national norms because national tests are not taken, but results in standardised tests of attainment indicate that pupils' performance in English and mathematics is higher than national norms. This assessment data, together with evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of written work, shows that junior pupils make at least good and sometimes better progress, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able pupils.
- 3.5 The following analysis of senior school attainment uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. The results at GCSE are above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. At A level, the results are above the national averages for girls in maintained schools and in maintained selective schools. A large majority of pupils progress to their first choice of university, with several gaining scholarships.
- 3.6 At both GCSE and A level, these levels of attainment show that pupils make progress that is good in relation to pupils of similar ability. The A level results in 2015 suggest a further improvement in progress. Pupils with SEND, EAL and the more able all make overall progress which matches that of their peers. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs, and those in the sixth form with SEND, make particularly strong progress. In the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all pupils said that they felt they were making good progress.

3.7 Pupils throughout develop highly positive attitudes to learning coupled with strong enjoyment in lessons. Within the senior school, whilst there was limited evidence of initiative being taken within the classroom, pupils' strong determination to achieve was clearly expressed in interviews and further evidenced by their well organised written work. Pupils at all stages work highly effectively by themselves, and in collaboration with their peers.

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

3.8 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.

3.9 The curriculum fully supports the school's aim to realise the potential of each pupil through a rich and stimulating experience, the promotion of teamwork and the development of leadership capabilities. It meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able, and covers all the required subjects. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is excellent, through individual and group support.

3.10 In Years 1 and 2, comprehensive planning and learning 'themes' are highly effective in promoting knowledge and understanding. In Years 3 to 6, the curriculum develops a broad range of skills, including a helpful introduction to classical and modern foreign languages. Specialist teaching, sometimes drawing upon expertise from within the senior school, promotes more detailed study in areas such as science and art. A strong outdoor education programme is effective in complementing the academic provision.

3.11 In the senior school, the curriculum is adapted where necessary to meet individual needs. A range of technological subjects and modern foreign languages is introduced from Year 7, assisting pupils to develop strong creative and linguistic skills. Provision for the more able pupils through the school is made through activities which include junior public speaking examinations, mathematical challenges and additional activities targeted at the more able pupils in Years 7 to 10. In the sixth form an enterprising extension programme is tailored to meet individual needs, including such courses as mathematics for scientists and the Extended Project Qualification, as well as popular interest courses such as sign language. Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority said that they felt that the school provided an appropriate range of subjects for their children.

3.12 New courses introduced since the previous inspection include 'Habits of the Mind' in Years 3 to 6, aimed at eliminating the fear of failure amongst pupils, as recommended at the previous inspection. A relevant and well-resourced ICT course has been implemented from Years 1 to 9. Further mathematics has been introduced at GCSE, and graphics, sports science and electronics are now available at A level through the efficient sharing of resources with the boys' division.

3.13 A highly effective careers programme runs from Year 6, and pupils in the sixth form are given detailed advice about the opportunities within higher education, apprenticeships or for entering employment. A well-planned scheme of personal, social, health, and economic education (PSHEE), taught by form tutors and frequently supplemented by talks from outside speakers, successfully addresses issues such as democracy and tolerance. The marking of Remembrance Day by the whole school, is an example of how the school supports Britishness, and this is evident throughout the curriculum. There is a balanced presentation of opposing views in the coverage of political issues. A programme of well planned and carefully

targeted trips and visits complements pupils' classroom experiences. The programme includes varied and challenging expeditions to the Foundation's outdoor education centre at Patterdale in the Lake District.

- 3.14 Since the previous inspection the wide range of extra-curricular activities has been extended even further. Years 1 to 6 enjoy a range which may include cheerleading, fencing, judo, Mandarin and climbing. The senior school also provides an extensive range of activities including, for example, academic societies, creative writing, music, drama, archery and skiing. All pupils in Year 9 follow The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, with significant numbers progressing through to gold level by the time they leave the school.
- 3.15 Links with the community are outstanding, and are developed through frequent musical performances and art exhibitions, shared use of the sports and arts centres and a far-reaching and well-monitored volunteering programme which involves every pupil.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 Teaching is highly effective in supporting the aim of the school to realise the potential of each pupil. It fully meets the needs of all pupils, including those with statements of special educational needs and others with SEND, pupils with EAL and the more able, supporting them in making good progress. The vast majority of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that their teachers helped them to learn. Teachers know their pupils' capabilities and use data effectively to monitor progress. The learning support department helps to ensure that teachers are equipped with the right strategies to enable individual pupils to fulfil their potential, particularly for pupils with statements of special educational needs.
- 3.18 Through detailed planning, lessons are well structured, engaging and challenging, with a variety of activities and teaching styles designed to stimulate pupils of all abilities. The school has responded to the previous inspection by developing further strategies to challenge all pupils, particularly the more able. It has also been highly successful in creating an environment in which pupils are encouraged to take risks in lessons, without fear of failure. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- 3.19 Skilful questioning helps pupils to develop their understanding, and teaching is often extremely creative, for example in a junior science lesson where pupils used gloves and ear plugs to empathise with a senior citizen whose senses had become dulled. Time is managed extremely well, and a brisk pace enables pupils to make good progress. Almost all of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that they were encouraged to do things for themselves and to work independently. Teaching is such that pupils do not expect to be provided with answers easily, but rather with the tools to discover them for themselves. For example, tablet computers are used effectively to conduct personal research within art and design and technology.
- 3.20 Teaching is highly supportive and encouraging for pupils. The very warm relationships that prevail between teachers and their pupils, founded on mutual respect and high expectations, are a distinctive and ever-present feature of lessons. Teaching is characterised by teachers' outstanding knowledge of, and passion for, their subject, and their infectious enthusiasm. These attributes contribute significantly to pupils' academic success and their love of learning and scholarship.

For example, in a phonics session, staff created a productive and highly enjoyable learning environment, and an English lesson on poetry was extremely effective as pupils shared their delight in the effect of language on our collective memories.

- 3.21 Teaching benefits from high-quality resources which greatly enhance learning. The well-stocked libraries provide pupils with a range of tools to aid independent learning and the worksheets and other materials produced by teachers are both informative and helpful. Teaching makes very effective use of ICT, often in imaginative and enterprising ways. Pupils acknowledge that tasks set for homework are worthwhile and that marking is detailed and constructive. The standard of marking is much improved since the previous inspection; only in a very few cases was there evidence of infrequent or perfunctory marking. Assessment in lessons, sometimes using electronic books to create a record of progress, and the encouragement of pupils to identify their own and their peers' strengths and weaknesses, ensure that pupils learn from their mistakes and build on their successes. For example, the use of explicit success criteria in Years 1 to 6 encourages pupils to reflect on the quality of their own work.
- 3.22 Teachers are always prepared to help outside the classroom, providing extra subject clinics and offering one-to-one support. Pupils speak with gratitude about their teachers' willingness to 'go the extra mile'. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.

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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The high quality of pupils' personal development throughout the school shows that the school actively promotes principles which fully reflect its aim that pupils leave the school as self-confident young people equipped to make a difference for good in the wider community.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils of all ages show a high degree of tolerance and maturity in listening to the opinions of others. In Years 1 to 6, pupils show enhanced self-knowledge resulting from the 'Habits of Mind' initiative and, across the school, self-esteem is further developed through the celebration of success within assemblies. Pupils are self-confident and able to articulate their feelings clearly and without embarrassment. They enjoy considering spiritual and ethical matters from differing viewpoints, and show understanding of their own and others' beliefs.
- 4.4 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. From an early age they develop a very strong sense of right and wrong, and their behaviour around the school is exemplary. They embody the school's code of conduct in showing consideration for others and treating others and the environment with respect. They understand and respect the civil and criminal law of England. Pupils and staff support civic events, such as Holocaust Memorial Day, at which pupils frequently provide the music. In Year 8, pupils visited a slavery museum and discussed racial prejudice and intolerance in their next form tutor period. The ethos of the school is based around clear values such as a respect for democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is outstanding. They are eager to accept responsibility and show initiative outside the classroom. They contribute strongly to the society of the school in elected roles, whether as 'ambassadors' or prefects, members of the school council or as peer mentors. Their readiness to volunteer reflects the importance attached by the school to 'giving back' through participation in community action programmes. For example, junior pupils collected chocolate coins to raise funds for a local urban charity and a school in Kenya. In the senior school, a mathematics department innovation linking performance in revision tests to provision of water to the poor has been embraced by pupils, enabling a well to be installed in a village in Tanzania. Pupils demonstrate social, political and economic awareness, as shown clearly in a sixth-form lesson on globalisation. They understand the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination, and relationships are relaxed and supportive at all stages within the school, regardless of pupils' background, personal characteristics or special educational need.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They learn to understand and respect other faiths and cultures through weekly assemblies, celebrating their achievements and those of their own and different cultural traditions through their work in literature, art and music. For example, pupils with EAL in an English lesson shared family phrases from their own cultures, and sixth-form pupils showed appreciation of the benefits of the arts to society. In interviews, pupils demonstrated their support for the democratic process and their knowledge of the public institutions and services of England. Their understanding is further enhanced through younger pupils' visits to

the local government offices and by presentations from visiting speakers within PSHEE, for example on parliamentary processes.

- 4.7 By the time pupils leave the sixth form, they are confident and mature individuals with a strong set of moral values and a keen sense of duty towards society.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff provide highly effective support and guidance for pupils of all ages, in line with the school's aim of creating a supportive environment. Pastoral managers use comprehensive systems to track pupils' development and to monitor their well-being. Communication between staff at all levels is strong and ensures that information about pupils is appropriately shared and recorded. Form tutors know their pupils well, enabling a swift and supportive response to their needs. In the questionnaire, almost all parents expressed themselves as highly satisfied with the care their children receive.
- 4.10 Across the school, relationships are characterised by mutual respect, both between teachers and pupils and within the pupil body itself. Pupils are confident of receiving support from staff, should any problems arise. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles, emphasised in assemblies and through food technology and PSHEE classes. A wide variety of healthy meals is available at lunchtime. A full sporting programme provides opportunity for pupils to engage in regular exercise.
- 4.11 The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Incidents of harassment or bullying, including cyber-bullying, are rare and evidence from the scrutiny of the school's documentation and pupil interviews indicates that such incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively, with due account being taken of any pupils with SEND. In the questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils reported that teachers were not always fair in their allocation of rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence, including examination of records and interviews with pupils, showed that teachers promote good behaviour consistently and fairly, and in line with school policy.
- 4.12 In the questionnaire a small minority of pupils expressed concern that the school did not seek and listen to their views but inspection evidence found that the existing channels are effective. Democratically elected school councils operate successfully throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to make suggestions for future school developments. For example, this has led to the design and creation of a sensory garden for junior pupils and improvements to toilet facilities in the senior school.
- 4.13 The school has an appropriate plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. The high-quality child protection training is updated regularly and in line with recent guidance, for example relating to measures to prevent extremism. The well-written and clearly structured policy meets all current requirements. There are strong links with local safeguarding agencies. Staff appointments are conducted diligently, and all necessary checks are completed. The single central register of staff appointments is carefully maintained.
- 4.16 Health and safety policies are implemented fully throughout the school. All of the necessary measures are in place to reduce the risk from fire. Emergency evacuation practices take place at least termly, including specific provision for pupils who are physically impaired. There are regular and thorough inspections to reduce the risks posed by other hazards. Records of safety checks, and subsequent actions undertaken to address them, are mostly thorough but are not all of the same high standard across the school. There are thorough risk assessments for activities both on and off the school premises. Overall, the site is clean, well maintained and provides a secure and stimulating environment in which to learn.
- 4.17 The first-aid policy is thorough and helpful in identifying the procedures to be followed. The medical centre provides highly effective support for pupils who are sick or injured, including the careful management of any chronic conditions. Numerous staff have first-aid training, enabling them to assist in the care of pupils. The physical needs of pupils with SEND are identified with meticulous care, and appropriate support is put in place.
- 4.18 Admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored. Absences are followed up promptly, and monitored carefully by senior staff.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body provides strong and strategic oversight of the work of the girls' division. Governance has a clear awareness of the challenges which the school faces, and a well-formulated strategic plan, reviewed triennially at an 'away day' event, is designed carefully to enable the school to fulfil its aims.
- 5.3 Governance is well informed by detailed reports from senior leadership across the school, and from the various committees, with which there is excellent communication. The work of senior leadership is evaluated rigorously, with personal objectives being set, alongside key performance measures for the school. Governance is highly effective in meeting its responsibilities for financial planning and the investment in staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Visits to classes, familiarising itself with the day-to-day operation of the school, including strong support for school events, strengthens this effectiveness further.
- 5.4 The extensive safeguarding policy is formally reviewed by the governing body on an annual basis. Safeguarding is given close consideration with careful attention to the correct implementation of policy, as well as consideration of changes required by legislation. Governance benefits greatly from the expertise of a governor with a detailed insight into safeguarding matters. Helpful focus on each individual section of the school is provided through the close involvement of governors with a particular interest in juniors' education, whilst another governor provides valuable support for the work of the EYFS.
- 5.5 Health and safety matters are monitored effectively through a foundation-wide committee which responds to issues raised by school groups. Induction training is helpful in providing new members of the board with a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and governors also undertake additional training of relevance to their role. Overall, governance is highly successful in providing support and challenge for the whole school.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 Strong leadership and effective management throughout the school make a significant contribution to the fulfilment of the school's aims. Senior leadership across all parts of the school has a clear-sighted and well-articulated vision and direction so that a strong sense of purpose pervades the school community. The excellent communication between the different sections of the school ensures a coherent approach to developments throughout. This is reflected in excellent outcomes for pupils.
- 5.8 Carefully considered strategic planning is backed up by rigorous self-evaluation at all levels. The girls' division development plan is consistent with the strategic plan for the Bolton School Foundation. It is highly effective in supporting improvements.

Within the senior school, departmental development plans are also aligned clearly with the school plan. An excellent understanding of the needs of pupils, combined with effective processes of self-evaluation, contribute to thorough subject planning.

- 5.9 The leadership groups provide effective support and encouragement for their staff across the school's organisation. Teamwork is clearly evident and staff feel valued. Staff at all levels understand and embrace the school's ethos. Leadership sets high expectations and involves staff fully in the school's development, so that staff feel included, for example in undertaking an audit as to measures being taken to promote aspects of being British, such as respect and democracy.
- 5.10 Leadership across the school is energetic and enthusiastic, and promotes a strong educational ethos, including responding appropriately and ambitiously to recent curricular and pastoral changes. Managers demonstrate a strong sense of purpose in ensuring the effective implementation of day-to-day policies and procedures which enhance the academic performance, welfare and well-being of their pupils. In particular, there is effective implementation and monitoring of all matters relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Policies are reviewed regularly and systematically, and necessary revisions are clearly detailed to staff. Risk assessments, conducted by heads of department or by those leading trips or expeditions, are properly monitored by senior management across the school. Management has not been entirely rigorous in monitoring the recording of some routine safety checks and the actions taken to address them.
- 5.11 The school is successful in recruiting high quality staff, and there is strong regard to safe recruitment procedures, including the necessary pre-employment checks and their correct entry onto the centralised register. Leaders encourage and provide extensive opportunities for continuing professional development, thus promoting the retention of staff. There is strong provision for the professional development of staff across all areas of the school, with comprehensive records being kept of any additional qualifications which have been gained, or training which has been undertaken. Staff benefit from a system of annual appraisal, which also incorporates a mid-year review against targets. All staff are provided with appropriate training in child protection and other welfare, health and safety matters, and newly appointed staff undertake a helpful induction programme. Overall the school is highly effective in promoting democracy, equality and diversity, and this is evident within the daily life of the school.
- 5.12 In their responses to the questionnaire almost all parents expressed strong satisfaction with the quality of education and support which the school provides, and said that they felt that their children were well cared for, as well as praising the quality of information and levels of communication from all areas of the school.
- 5.13 The recently introduced parental portal has been very helpful in enhancing parents' access to information about their children. Parents throughout the school have full access to the required school policies.
- 5.14 Parents are kept well informed about the life of the school in ways appropriate to the age of their children, including high quality termly publications such as *Voice* and *News*, and the annual *Spirit* and *Junior Girls' Review* magazines. Weekly newsletters from the senior school, and regular correspondence between parents and senior staff concerning pastoral and academic issues, ensure that parents are made aware of developments. Parents of new and prospective pupils also receive

detailed information which helps to successfully prepare their children for life within the school.

- 5.15 The parents' associations provide extensive opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school, with a calendar of events which serve a valuable social purpose, as well as raising additional funds for further items of equipment. Parents are also openly welcomed at concerts, drama productions, sporting fixtures, exhibitions and other special events. A school community choir, which rehearses regularly and includes staff, governors and parents of both past and present pupils, also helps to cement the very strong relationships between parents and the school.
- 5.16 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints policy which is available to all parents. Scrutiny of school documentation suggests that the school handles complaints with sensitivity and in a timely manner, and this view was confirmed by interviews with parents.
- 5.17 Parents have ample opportunities to be involved in their children's work and progress. Examples, for parents of infant-age pupils, include mathematics workshops, and helping out on trips. In other areas of the school, the use of tablet computers and homework diaries enables parents to be closely involved in their children's work and progress by allowing them to be aware of the tasks in hand and of how well their children are doing.
- 5.18 Written reports are thorough, providing a summary of each pupil's achievements, and, where appropriate, details of predicted grades and targets for improvement. The school also provides interim progress reports in the senior school. Reports are supplemented by regular opportunities for parents to meet with teachers, and there are information evenings for each year group throughout the school.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding. Most children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and abilities, preparing them extremely well for the next stage of their education. The provision for learning and care is exemplary, with the needs of all children, including those identified as having SEND, EAL and the more able, being catered for extremely well. Children's personal development skills are strong and at all ages they are happy. They demonstrate that they feel secure in their environment through the confident and enthusiastic approach they show towards their learning and the exploration of activities. The highest priority is placed upon keeping children safe, with requirements for safeguarding and welfare being understood and adhered to conscientiously by all staff. Leadership and management continue to build upon the successes of the setting. Thorough systems for self-evaluation underpin the well-considered development plans. These now link closely together, and include an overarching plan for the whole EYFS, thus meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. This ensures that children continue to experience the very best early years education, as appropriate to their age.

6.(b) Effectiveness of leadership and management

6.2 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. Leaders have high expectations and are ambitious in their plans to further enhance the already strong quality of provision. They are very well supported by the governing body. There is a shared desire amongst all staff to provide the best possible education and care for early years children. Staff are supervised extremely well in their role, through a regular programme of meetings, the sharing of best practice and extensive opportunities for professional development. Staff are encouraged to gain additional qualifications, and management leads by example by undertaking higher levels of study. Great care is taken to ensure that the views of staff, parents and children are included in self-evaluation, and the findings are then used to frame well-constructed development plans. Leaders and managers listen to parents' needs, as was seen in the successful implementation of Saturday drop-in sessions and evening workshops which provide working parents with a chance to learn a range of relevant skills, so that they can support their children's continuing learning at home.

6.3 Across the EYFS, care is taken to ensure that the learning programmes spark children's interests and provide sufficient challenge for their age and stage of development. Leadership and management are highly successful in planning and managing the curriculum so that children's learning is systematically built upon year-by-year, fully meeting all requirements. Consequently, by the end of the EYFS, children are extremely well prepared for school and the next stage in their learning.

6.4 Regularly reviewed and comprehensive policies and procedures are well suited to the age of the children, and include those that promote equality and diversity, the qualities of being British, and good behaviour. The leadership and management ensure that staff are fully aware of the expectations, and follow them consistently. High behavioural expectations are promoted strongly, and children are seen to respond spontaneously to these, with no acts of bullying or unkindness observed.

- 6.5 Highly efficient systems support children who are identified as working at a level below that expected for their age. Staff work closely with parents, and involve external agencies where necessary. This helps to narrow gaps in outcomes between different groups of children.
- 6.6 The leadership is extremely successful in meeting statutory requirements, including for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Procedures to help prevent radicalisation and extremism are appropriate for the age of children. All staff are appropriately trained for their role in safeguarding.
- 6.7 Of the few parents who responded to the questionnaire, most were very positive about their children's experiences. All reported that their children were happy within the EYFS and felt that they were well cared for. Parents spoken to during the inspection spoke of their appreciation of the advice and support provided by staff; they value the fact that staff know their children as individuals, and reported that their children love coming to school.

6.(c) Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 6.8 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Across the EYFS, staff plan highly appropriate learning opportunities for the range of children in their care. Care is taken to support and challenge all children, including those with SEND, EAL and those more able, so that they achieve to the best of their ability. Staff are knowledgeable practitioners, who demonstrate a secure understanding of child development and current thinking in EYFS education. They introduce activities skilfully and show strong subject knowledge. Thorough systems for assessment and the careful tracking of children's progress are used to excellent effect, using information from parents, previous providers where appropriate, and the 'Kidzone' child-care staff. Planning is thorough and specific, and is clearly informed by the individual's needs and interests.
- 6.9 Through their enthusiasm and encouragement staff foster a love for learning in the children, thereby promoting their educational development. A close working partnership with parents, and the sharing of key information, ensures that there is a consistent approach to children's learning. A very small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that they were not provided with sufficient information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence found there to be a suitable amount and range of information for the age of child. Detailed reports, including the required progress check at age two, and an annual, formal report for older children, provide valuable information for parents. They demonstrate that staff know children extremely well. Further information and support is shared in many ways, including through daily diaries, detailed learning journals, formal parents' meetings and day-to-day discussions during dropping off and collection time.
- 6.10 Excellent use is made of the highly appropriate and stimulating resources, indoors and outdoors. These foster curiosity and prompt the promotion of diversity through investigations, such as exploring the kitchenware and food utensils used by different cultures. Staff are excellent role models, and take care to ensure that children can access the full range of activities, thus effectively promoting equal opportunities. The curriculum is further enhanced for children over three through the provision of specialist lessons such as ballet, swimming and French. Nursery children benefit from access to a well-planned garden that provides plentiful opportunities for exploration of natural objects. Nature days have been popular additions to the pre-

school curriculum but there is currently limited provision for older classes, where the plans to address this have not yet been implemented.

- 6.11 High-quality teaching enables children to succeed well, relative to their starting points and capabilities, and they develop excellent learning skills for their age. Carefully planned and imaginative activities encourage children to develop independent learning skills and present highly appropriate challenge. For example, the youngest children are provided with a number of stimuli, such as large trays of spaghetti and water to promote sensory exploration, whereas children aged two are encouraged to use their imagination and physical skills to create their own dens, using large boxes and fabric. The oldest children are presented with activities which foster their problem-solving skills, as was seen when Reception children investigated the changes in various forms of ice blocks as they melted during the course of the inspection week. In all classes, staff make excellent use of questioning to reinforce and extend children's thinking. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

6.(d) Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 6.12 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children is outstanding. Staff successfully promote a culture of mutual respect and love for learning. Children approach all that they do positively, and are proud of their achievements. They demonstrate growing self-awareness and confidence, and develop excellent learning habits. They listen well and behave impeccably. Children clearly enjoy their learning, and this is evident in the busy, purposeful learning environments which they eagerly explore. Children engage fully in imaginative play and sustain interest in activities for long periods.
- 6.13 Well-established systems help children settle easily into the setting, and the transition into the next class is carefully planned, thereby supporting children both socially and emotionally. For instance, the youngest children settle quickly, owing to the phased admission process and careful placing with a suitable key person. Children's social and emotional skills are well-developed for their age. Each child's key person knows them extremely well, and provides appropriate emotional and physical support, whilst at the same time encouraging independence and self-confidence. High standards of care continue in the extremely well run 'Kidzone', which is provided for the older children. Here children can relax, mix with older children and experience a wide range of interesting activities which are well suited to their age.
- 6.14 Prompt and regular attendance is encouraged by staff, and expectations are understood by parents. Children understand the behavioural expectations and follow them closely. They take their responsibilities seriously and show compassion and kindness to others, as was seen when a pre-school child was keen to offer his turn in a game to another child as he had 'already had a turn'. Children learn how to take care of themselves. Through discussion they show a growing awareness of risks and how to manage these, for example whilst using modelling compound, pre-school children understood that it was advisable for the teacher to add the hot water. They are encouraged to adopt healthy practices, such as making sensible choices during meal times, and participating in physical activities.
- 6.15 Children's personal development is excellent; they are happy, caring individuals who show great consideration for others. They are respectful of others' differences and learn about different cultures. Older children have a strong understanding of the

wider world, as was seen in the role-play igloo where 'Inuits' fished for their dinner. From an early age, they learn how to share and to tolerate others. Through routines such as self-registration, they start to take responsibility for themselves. By the end of the EYFS they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education, and for contributing to the wider society and their life in Britain.

6.(e) Outcomes for children

- 6.16 The outcomes for children are outstanding. Children join the setting with a range of skills and abilities. By the end of the EYFS, the vast majority of children meet the expected levels of development for their age, with many exceeding these. Results are consistently higher than national averages. Most children make excellent progress from their starting points, ensuring that they can move on confidently to the next stage of their education. The youngest children show a perseverance whilst riding wheeled toys, as well as a curiosity of the natural world when working with their friends to plant herbs. Three year-olds develop their skills in all areas of learning through play and practical activities. They show a growing ability in early writing whilst using sticks to form letters and numbers in a cornflower paste, and demonstrate an understanding of simple mathematical concepts whilst counting, and using scales when baking. The oldest children speak confidently in front of a group. They write for a range of purposes using their phonic knowledge, such as when making a class encyclopaedia on animal facts. They acquire a secure understanding of larger numbers, as was seen when acting out a role play within a shop, and during practical investigations involving blocks and tape measures. Children confidently use a range of technology such as computer tablets and interactive whiteboards.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under two.

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

Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.