



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

ST AUBYN'S SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Aubyn's School

Full Name of School	St Aubyn's School
DfE Number	317/6002
Registered Charity Number	270143
Address	St Aubyn's School Bunces Lane Woodford Green Essex IG8 9DU
Telephone Number	020 85041577
Fax Number	020 85042053
Email Address	school@staubyns.com
Head	Mr Leonard Blom
Chair of Governors	Mrs Elizabeth Ruff
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	522
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (300 boys; 222 girls;)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 117 11-13: 27 5-11: 378
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 522
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Barbara Knight
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	20 to 23 Jan 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) 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.

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.

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 a governors' representative, 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 Richard Johnson	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Heather Beeby	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sheila Hayward	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Dr David Livingstone	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Nova Shoemith	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, SoH school)
Mr Chris Manville	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Aubyn's School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from three to thirteen years. Founded in 1884, it moved to its current site in 1919, and became co-educational in 1995. It is a registered charity, supervised by a board of governors. The current headmaster was appointed in 2013.
- 1.2 The school is located in Woodford Green, a residential area of north London adjacent to Epping Forest. The eight-acre site includes specialist teaching facilities for science, information and communication technology (ICT), music, sport, art, DT and drama, and a library. The nursery unit for the youngest children is adjacent to the main school, and shares many of its facilities. Recent developments include the building of a new dining hall and performance studio, the creation of additional nursery space, enhanced art and technology areas and new medical facilities. Since the previous inspection, a full time Head of Additional Learning has been appointed as part of the leadership team, the timetable has been changed to increase teaching time and the after school activity programme extended.
- 1.3 The school's aim is for its pupils to develop into confident, independent learners and considerate, moral and responsible citizens, through the provision of a learning environment characterised by high aspirations and a broad and balanced curriculum, responsive to each individual's needs. It is a Christian foundation that welcomes pupils from all faiths and none.
- 1.4 There are 522 pupils: 300 boys and 222 girls. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) there are 117 children, some of whom attend part time; 97 receive nursery funding. Four pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 29 receive additional learning support. There are no pupils with an educational, health and care plan. Seventeen pupils require, and receive, support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.5 The results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average. Pupils mostly come from professional and business families in the local area, and reflect the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to be found there. A majority of pupils leave at the age of 11. Pupils almost all move to local selective independent and maintained day schools.
- 1.6 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 St Aubyn's School is highly successful in meeting its aims. Pupils' achievements are excellent, and many of them gain admission to highly selective senior schools. They are highly committed learners, and demonstrate excellent behaviour in lessons. The curriculum provided for them covers all required areas and meets the needs of the pupils who attend. It is notable for the provision of an excellent activity programme, and the opportunities to develop links with other European schools. Opportunities to make the most effective use of the pupils' skills in ICT in all areas of learning are not fully developed. Teaching is good and is characterised by positive relationships between staff and pupils. Recent developments in planning and using assessment to track pupil progress have successfully improved the outcomes for pupils and the school's revised teaching policies identify clearly where further improvement is to be focused. At present, these policies are not applied consistently in a small number of lessons. In the EYFS, planning does not always take enough note of the children's Foundation Stage profiles.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development and the school's pastoral care are both excellent. This can be seen in pupils' strong social awareness and the outstanding respect for other beliefs and cultures. Highly positive relationships are found throughout the school community, and the effective care and support given to individuals are recognised by both parents and pupils. Procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are rigorous and conscientiously followed, creating a safe learning environment.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is excellent. Governors monitor and support the school and carry out their regulatory responsibilities very effectively. The recent changes in the leadership of the school have made a significant improvement to the quality of education provided. The highly committed team have made excellent progress in raising standards, and have a clear awareness of where further improvements are required to ensure excellent standards are achieved in all aspects. Links with parents are good and parents express high levels of satisfaction with almost all aspects of their children's education. The recommendations of the school's previous inspection have been fully addressed.

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 that teaching strategies are sufficiently flexible to take account of the needs and interests of pupils of all abilities during lessons.
2. Provide increased opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their learning across all subjects.
3. In the EYFS, to make more effective use of all available information, including data from Foundation Stage profiles, to identify gaps in provision and ensure that planning accurately reflects children's needs and interests.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The children in the EYFS are confident and expressive communicators. In the Nursery they begin to form letters accurately and begin to identify familiar words as they retell stories. They count confidently to ten and recognise corresponding numerals as they match objects to a number line. In Reception they use appropriate mathematical language of number and shape to describe the world around them. Children are independent, active learners who concentrate well and think creatively in group challenges. For example, in building and testing a road ramp for cars, children showed excellent co-operation and problem solving skills. They show confidence and dexterity as they manipulate a computer mouse. They enjoy their learning, making good progress in relation to their individual starting points and capabilities. Most reach, and some exceed, the expected level of development by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 3.3 Older pupils' skills in numeracy and literacy are highly developed. They are able to use these to considerable effect in their creative writing and mathematical tasks. They are articulate, listen well, and apply these skills well in support of their learning. Their understanding of scientific concepts is secure, and they show high level ICT skills when opportunities are provided to use them. Their high standards in reading are frequently enhanced by the enjoyment that they find in literature; pupils are often to be found with a reading book to hand. Pupils display good creative and artistic skills. When opportunities are provided, they use independent learning skills to enhance their knowledge and understanding in subjects such as geography, history and religious studies. For example, following a Year 5 geography lesson pupils' research on coastal features was used to great effect in a subsequent lesson.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages develop good physical skills and enjoy a wide variety of sports. They have achieved many successes in team and individual sporting events, including football, netball, cricket and athletics, where they regularly compete at district level. Their musical achievements are good. Pupils clearly enjoy singing and many learn a musical instrument, and perform confidently in a number of ensembles and choirs. Results in external examinations reflect the high standards attained by individual pupils. Numerous drama productions help pupils to develop strong oral and dramatic skills.
- 3.5 The pupils' achievement in a wide range of extra-curricular activities is good and sometimes excellent. They take part in a large number of activities outside the classroom and have achieved success in these different areas. Many pupils participate in the school's own cadet force, developing their personal resilience and fitness as well as their teamwork and practical outdoor skills.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative national statistics are available. Results in National Curriculum tests at the ages of 7 and 11 have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils are making progress that is excellent in relation to that of pupils of similar abilities. This is also reflected in the school's own tracking data and the inspection team's findings from observing lessons, examining the pupils' work and meeting them. The school's own tracking of attainment and progress using

standardised tests shows most pupils achieving well beyond the expectation for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. On leaving the school, almost all pupils proceed to local independent schools, many of which are highly selective. They have achieved a number of awards, ranging from academic scholarships to those that reflect their abilities in other areas, such as music.

- 3.7 Progress for both pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent; their learning needs are quickly identified and they are supported effectively. Classroom observations indicate that the most able reach appropriately high standards and make progress that is at least good, and often excellent, in relation to their abilities.
- 3.8 Pupils have very mature and positive attitudes towards their learning. As a result, their behaviour in lessons is excellent. Rapid progress is linked to the pupils' enthusiasm to learn. In interviews, many indicated that they were very keen to do well. The older pupils, in particular, show a strong awareness of the objectives of each lesson, and are able to review their work, conscientiously following up suggestions for improvement. They work very effectively with each other, in groups and as a class.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 The curriculum successfully fulfils the school's aim to enable each pupil to become a self-confident, independent learner. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs and parents are well satisfied with the range of subjects offered.
- 3.11 Throughout the EYFS, classrooms and outdoor areas, including a woodland area and 'secret playground', are richly resourced and well organised to provide a highly stimulating environment, ensuring an appropriate balance of indoor and outdoor play. The conservatory areas provide valuable additional space for extending learning outside of the classroom allowing 'messy' play activities and co-operative, self-directed learning. Purposeful play, using a wide range of imaginative resources, stimulates communication and language skills, such as using mathematical language to describe the comparative sizes of three treasure chests discovered in the sand tray. Effectively co-ordinated support and provision for children with additional needs ensures all children achieve well and make good progress.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, the curriculum is effective in its coverage of all the requisite areas of learning. It is enhanced by the inclusion of French from Nursery and Latin from Year 6, taught by specialist teachers. Wide-ranging and detailed religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes of study make a notable contribution to the curriculum by giving pupils a very good preparation for teenage and adult life, including a grounding in the key features of British values. The curriculum also provides an excellent preparation for senior school entrance examinations.
- 3.13 Regular reviews by subject leaders and thorough subject audits ensure that the curriculum is constantly updated and improved in line with national developments and the pupils' needs. Planning successfully ensures that the same curriculum is covered in each class within a year group. A combination of specialist teaching for the older pupils and the use of grouping by prior attainment from Year 3 onwards enables all pupils to have good access to the major subjects. Most schemes of work and lesson planning include activities tailored to the needs of all pupils, including the more able, and cross-curricular links are made where appropriate.

- 3.14 Since the previous inspection the school has introduced additional specialist teaching in ICT and design technology (DT) lessons for Year 3 and above, thereby improving the provision for pupils in these subjects. Pupils' use of ICT outside these lessons is not widespread and the tablet computers available are not yet fully used in learning. Creative subjects, such as art, have a limited profile within the school in terms of displays and other opportunities to share creative outcomes.
- 3.15 The school has made excellent progress in following up the previous inspection's recommendation to develop its learning support structure for those pupils with SEND and EAL. The co-curricular programme has also recently been restructured and offers excellent and varied activities. Both pupils and parents speak very highly of it. Many visits in support of the work done in school are arranged, both locally and further afield, including to museums. Older pupils all experience residential visits either on activity weeks in the UK or in Normandy, where they visit the Bayeux Tapestry and a Great War cemetery. Visiting poets, authors and theatre groups further enhance the formal curriculum.
- 3.16 St Aubyn's participates in the Comenius Project which gives all pupils an excellent opportunity to participate in activities with European schools and learn about the lives of their citizens. Older pupils experience what it is like to be disabled when they assist visually impaired people in tenpin bowling sessions or help to host a Christmas Lunch for elderly or disabled people. These links with the community provide excellent curricular opportunities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, staff have a good understanding of how to promote good learning and development. Most adults engage well in children's play, stimulating critical and creative thinking, language development, problem solving and emergent writing. In these interactions, practitioners skilfully use questioning to encourage further experimentation. In a minority of less successful activities adult input is overly directive and a lack of clarity in what is expected results in children not being fully engaged, leading to slower progress and fewer opportunities for children to develop their own ideas.
- 3.19 Learning journey records provide a good overview of children's development and progress, based on a good range of observed evidence, including input from parents. Planning, to which all staff contribute, does not always take sufficient account of children's individual interests or the available information on performance, for example their Foundation Stage profiles. Throughout the setting, high quality resources, including excellent ICT provision, are used well and positively enhance children's learning.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, teaching is generally well planned and shows a good understanding of pupils' needs. Many examples of exemplary practice were seen; in these lessons there are well timed activities with all children fully engaged and suitably challenged at all levels. Almost all lessons promote at least good progress at all levels, including that of able pupils and those with SEND and EAL. Progress and achievement are less strong in the very small number of lessons where there is less pupil involvement and tasks are not sufficiently matched to their abilities in order to support or challenge pupils as necessary.

- 3.21 Planning documentation has recently been revised, ensuring that all aspects are well prepared and considered in advance. In most lessons, teaching is flexible, with planning frequently adjusted throughout the lesson to match the individual needs of learners. In a small minority of lessons where the planning is too rigorously adhered to, opportunities for pupil spontaneity and creativity are less well developed and promoted.
- 3.22 A review of marking has resulted in a system that gives pupils a good understanding of their level of achievement. The system includes 'red pen' questions which challenge pupils' understanding further; pupils speak enthusiastically about completing these additional challenges. The overall standard of marking is good. The use of assessment data is currently being revised to allow all teachers the opportunity to be more involved in the effective analysis and tracking of pupils' progress. A standardised level for a particular area in mathematics and English is produced weekly for each pupil. Older pupils are very aware of their current performance level and their highlighted targets. Pupils are highly motivated by this and are keen to strive to achieve their next target.
- 3.23 In the great majority of lessons teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. Where this knowledge is less secure, tasks are less challenging or concepts are above the level of pupil understanding. Good management of time ensures pupils are engaged and active for the majority of the lesson. Resources are generally used well to support learning. In almost all of the teaching observed, interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers to portray instructions and information. Their interactive use by pupils was seldom seen during the inspection and further opportunities to use ICT for learning and research in lessons are similarly being missed.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in taking active steps to meet its aim of producing pupils who are developing into considerate, moral and responsible citizens. They develop into emotionally-mature young people by the time they leave the school. The pupils develop a good sense of self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem through their work in lessons, the wide range of activities they participate in, and their links with the wider community. They develop confidence in questioning the world around them and appreciate the non-material aspects of life via their lessons, assemblies and activities. For example, following a visit to the poppy display at the Tower of London, pupils showed their appreciation of the sacrifices made on their behalf by others through their own poems.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, relationships between children are excellent, based upon respect and consideration for others. Children form strong friendships and readily approach adults to share what they have done or, when necessary, to seek comfort. Children benefit greatly from the opportunities to use the wider school facilities, and interaction with older pupils, for example in assemblies or when Year 8 play leaders spend time in the EYFS.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral awareness is excellent. All the pupils demonstrate a sense of right and wrong; their compliance with the school rules and codes of conduct is exemplary. They develop an understanding of how the civil and criminal law of England takes precedence over other codes. The pupils show natural and relaxed behaviour in lessons and around the school; they are co-operative in class, helpful, respectful of others and unfailingly polite. They develop empathy and respect each other's opinions and other differences. They are confident and eloquent in expressing their views, so as not to cause offence and offer support and compassion to fellow pupils. These values, alongside the fundamental British ones of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty, are explored during assemblies and the comprehensive PSHE programme. Pupils are often involved in moral discussions on ethical issues in the Year 6 philosophy course.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. The youngest children benefit greatly from sharing wider school facilities for meals and events. They enjoy interaction with older pupils, for example in assemblies or when Year 8 play leaders spend time in the EYFS. Throughout the school, the pupils are keen to take up positions of responsibility and trust. These include the school council, heads of house, cadet and play leaders, as well as captains of sport and music. Pupils in Year 8 receive a training course before applying for positions of responsibilities, which are allocated after interview, thus reflecting the world outside school.
- 4.6 There is an emphasis on service to others and a whole-school commitment to local, national and international charitable giving. The pupils choose the charities they support democratically and fund-raise using their own ideas. For example, Year 4 pupils chose the theme "to bring joy to sick children in hospital" as a project. Not only did they raise money by cake sales but also one pupil wrote a song which the group sang in a local hospital. The pupils' awareness of public institutions and services in England is excellent and promoted through lessons, visiting speakers and trips. For example, the school's proximity to London is used extremely well to

visit the Houses of Parliament. In their PSHE lessons pupils cover a wide range of topics; celebrating their own talents, discussing children's rights, slavery and the impact of religious fundamentalism, showing their awareness of social, political and economic issues in an even-handed manner.

- 4.7 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. The harmonious relationships observed between pupils of the many faiths and cultures in the school community are reflected in the mutual respect evident throughout the school. They have an outstanding understanding of a range of cultures and religions, including the Western tradition, illustrated when two Muslim pupils demonstrated their prayers in their RE class. Pupils in Year 8 discussed racism and discrimination during a lesson on British values. The pupils respond well to the many educational visits; these include visits to local mosques, churches and synagogues and trips further afield such as the Comenius project to Eastern Europe, all of which develop their understanding of other beliefs and cultures. Trips to plays and concerts in London and visiting theatre companies and authors in school have not only been enjoyed by pupils but also broadened their cultural knowledge.

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

- 4.8 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The staff know individual pupils very well and provide them with effective support and guidance within an exceptionally friendly and caring community. Pupils describe the school as helpful, supportive and kind and feel that there is always a member of staff whom they can turn to if they have a personal difficulty. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils are founded upon care, mutual trust and respect; relationships between the pupils themselves are also strong, being fostered in many lessons and activities.
- 4.10 The children's key people in the EYFS develop strong relationships with the youngest children and their families, reinforced through regular communication and sharing of information. Consideration for others and good behaviour are promoted as children are encouraged to 'see if their friends need help' as they tidy up at the end of an activity. In some cases personal hygiene habits such as washing hands before eating are not consistently reinforced. Children have access to play equipment for regular physical activity, fresh fruit is provided at snack times to promote healthy eating, and drinking water is available at all times.
- 4.11 Older pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and exercise through science and PSHE lessons and the provision of nutritious options at lunchtime. Care is taken over special dietary requirements. Pupils have many opportunities to be physically active through the inclusive physical education and games programmes.
- 4.12 The school effectively promotes good behaviour through positive reinforcement and encouragement. Rewards and sanctions are applied fairly throughout the school and well planned lessons contribute to the excellent behaviour. A small minority of parents and pupils expressed concerns regarding the school's response to bullying. Inspection findings from interviews with staff and pupils, together with a scrutiny of behaviour records, do not support this view; staff and pupils are strongly aware of how to guard against bullying and follow the procedures set out in the school's anti-bullying policy should a case arise.

- 4.13 Whilst a minority of pupils, in their responses to the questionnaire, felt that their opinions were not sought or acted upon, this was not supported by evidence during the inspection. Numerous examples of changes brought about following discussions in school council were found and suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute to decision making processes.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan for improving educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.16 The school promotes welfare, health and safety extremely well in all areas, including the EYFS, and provides a safe environment in which pupils can develop and learn. Two senior staff are trained as designated safeguarding officers, and there is a nominated governor who reports to the main board. The safeguarding policy is accurately reflected in current practice, and its suitability and implementation are rigorously reviewed by the governors each year. All staff receive appropriate child protection training at regular intervals, and the school has established strong links with local safeguarding agencies. Recruitment checks for new staff, which reflect the most recent guidance, are carried out efficiently and the central register of staff appointments is well maintained.
- 4.17 Health and safety procedures are excellent; detailed policies have been developed and are implemented carefully. Effective measures are taken to reduce potential hazards. Records and documentation of all aspects of health and safety are meticulously kept, detailed risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school and completed ahead of all external visits.
- 4.18 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils are excellent. The school nursing staff provide immediate access to high standards of care and pupils who become ill during the school day are accommodated in the medical centre and parents are informed as soon as practical. Stringent procedures are in place for recording first aid treatment and the administration of medicine. Thirty-nine staff have current first-aid certificates, including higher level and paediatric training where appropriate, and have a good knowledge of the medical needs of their pupils.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly.

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 has a strong insight into the operations of all sections of the school, and has established effective monitoring procedures. A range of different committees report to the main board on different aspects of school provision, such as education and finance. Governors visit the school frequently, and sometimes observe lessons in order to increase their understanding of academic provision. The school's leadership provide detailed reports and there is excellent communication with the senior staff, who regularly attend meetings to give presentations on relevant topics.
- 5.3 The board of governors has a broad balance of specialist skills, enabling it to discharge its responsibilities very effectively. This includes a thorough knowledge and understanding of the EYFS framework, through a governor who has specific oversight and experience of this area. Many governors are former pupils or parents of former pupils and have an in-depth knowledge of the school, and benefit from strong links with the school community and the parent association.
- 5.4 Governors provide excellent support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement, notably during the recent transition of headship. Firm financial control ensures that the school has sustained an extensive development programme that has provided many high quality facilities. The head has not yet been formally appraised.
- 5.5 Governors have a clear understanding of their regulatory responsibilities. They conduct a thorough annual review of the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding, together with their implementation. Health and safety and the associated risk assessments are carefully monitored along with the centralised register of appointments.

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 The school has undergone a period of rapid change under a new and restructured senior leadership team. Leadership and management at all levels are highly effective in identifying priorities based upon a clear evaluation of the school's needs, and in ensuring that they are achieved. The leadership is aware that further work is needed in certain areas to achieve consistency of impact. Many recent developments have enhanced the quality of education provided for the pupils. A clear educational vision is reflected in detailed policies that outline effective teaching and assessment strategies, and promote high standards of pastoral care. In consequence, the school is highly successful in meeting its aims, through the excellent achievement and personal development of its pupils and highly effective pastoral support.

- 5.8 Leadership in the EYFS is based on a secure knowledge of the framework, a good understanding of the setting's strengths and a clear vision for future developments. Adults take appropriate steps to create a safe, stimulating environment. Risk assessments identify precautions needed to minimize and rectify hazards. Self-evaluation of the setting is used well to identify priorities for strategic development, although the day to day monitoring of the educational programme, for example through analysis of the foundation profile scores, is less effective. Supervision and appraisal structures have been revised to provide greater levels of support for all staff in the setting, and teaching areas have been extended to provide increased learning space.
- 5.9 The school development plan lays down clear targets for improvement, and the ways in which these can be brought about, seen in the numerous initiatives that have recently been implemented. These include the introduction of a new assessment and recording system that allows for the effective tracking of individual progress and new procedures to monitor the quality of teaching. The school is aware that inconsistencies still remain in the implementation of aspects of the school's teaching policies, for example in providing opportunities for pupils to take a more active role in their own learning.
- 5.10 The highly committed staff are given clear guidance on how to realise the school's objectives. Leaders provide a supportive and stimulating environment for staff and pupils, so that they all feel involved in sustaining the caring ethos of the school. Staff are kept well informed through regular meetings and there are very effective processes to disseminate information throughout all departments of this large school.
- 5.11 Management at all levels is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high quality and well-qualified staff. They ensure that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils including their safeguarding, welfare, health and safety requirements. There is an extensive staff development programme to enhance their skills. A number of training sessions have taken place with the result that, for example, improvements have been made in the effective tracking of pupils' progress and in the development of higher-order thinking skills. Members of staff attend individual training courses when relevant; they are then able to share the key aspects of these with their colleagues.
- 5.12 A formal system of appraisal fosters the development of teaching and non-teaching staff, based upon clear and challenging targets for improvement. The sharing of good practice is encouraged as staff regularly observe one another's lessons, with a clear focus on specific aspects of their teaching. Monitoring procedures are thorough and include a work scrutiny, observed teaching and a review of pupil assessment records. A comprehensive induction programme ensures new staff are fully conversant with policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding and welfare.
- 5.13 The senior team is highly effective in the discharge of its responsibilities for the welfare, safety and safeguarding of pupils. Policies are reviewed regularly and implemented conscientiously. The centralised register for the appointment of staff, governors and volunteers is accurately maintained. Safe recruitment procedures are rigorously followed on all new staff appointments. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and the grounds, buildings and facilities are very well maintained, so that they provide a safe and secure setting in which pupils can learn and develop. In

doing this, the school is effectively supported by its highly committed support staff. All supervision duties are discharged efficiently.

- 5.14 The recommendations of the previous inspection have been fully implemented, and there is much evidence of shared good practice. The new learning support structure is now effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, and in helping staff to develop appropriate teaching strategies. Planning procedures in the EYFS have been updated so that all staff contribute, and there is a greater emphasis on outdoor learning.
- 5.15 Links with parents are good. Parents are highly satisfied with the education provided; they feel that their children are happy and well looked after at school. They state that they are offered an appropriate range of subjects and areas of experience and they would recommend this school to other parents. They are pleased with the information which the school provides about events and routines. Parents are very happy with all aspects of the EYFS provision and extremely positive about the recent changes.
- 5.16 Parents receive an abundance of high quality publications. A handbook for parents and curriculum directory are exceptionally informative and detailed and the excellent weekly newsletters keep parents up to date with the life and work of the school. The website provides useful information for current and prospective parents.
- 5.17 A small minority of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they were not given sufficient information about their child's progress. The inspection team agrees with this view; grade sheets, provided four times a year, and twice-yearly reports are clear and informative but do not usually provide suggestions for next steps or how learning can be supported at home. Parents' evenings are held at least twice a year for younger pupils and these provide good opportunities to discuss pupils' work and progress. In the senior year groups, opportunities for more formal parent meetings are limited to once a year. A small minority of parents also felt that that the school has not handled their concerns well. The inspection team found that a comprehensive record of complaints is maintained and concerns are handled with care in accordance with published procedures.
- 5.18 There are many good opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. They are invited to watch matches, attend musical concerts and dramatic productions and support their children whilst they complete their homework after school in the library. At the beginning of the autumn term, parents are invited to a departmental meeting and this enables them to meet their child's new teacher and learn about procedures and expectations for the new academic year. The St Aubyn's School Society does much to cement good relationships between school and home and runs social and other functions throughout the year. Funds raised provide additional equipment and resources for the benefit of the children.

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