



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
GRACE DIEU MANOR SCHOOL**

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## Grace Dieu Manor School

Full Name of School	<b>Grace Dieu Manor School</b>
DfE Number	<b>855/6007</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1115976</b>
Address	<b>Grace Dieu Manor School Grace Dieu Whitwick Coalville Leicestershire LE67 5UG</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01530 222276</b>
Fax Number	<b>01530 223184</b>
Email Address	<b>registrar@gracedieu.com</b>
Head	<b>Mr Charles Foulds</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Christina Armitage</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (152 boys; 124 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 39    5-11: 201 11-13: 36</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>Total: 276</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Nicola Speight</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>26 Nov 2013 to 29 Nov 2013</b>

## 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 October 2007.

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

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

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 with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

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Mr Peter Nicholson

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Reporting Inspector

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Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Grace Dieu Manor is a co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 to 13, founded in 1933 by the Rosminian order. It is set in 120 acres, in a manor house with additional more recent buildings, in rural Leicestershire. Within the grounds is an area which is designated as a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). The school is a charity and company limited by guarantee, owned by the Institute of Charity (the Rosminians). A board of governors, appointed by the directors of the charity, have responsibility for oversight of the running of the school.
- 1.2 The aims of the school are drawn from the Rosminian founder's philosophy. They focus upon developing the whole person through a strong emphasis on intellectual development, thereby encouraging enquiring minds and academic excellence. The aims of the school also place strong emphasis on the importance of physical development, promoting a healthy lifestyle; moral development, to ensure that pupils mature into responsible adults who are mindful of the needs of others; spiritual development, to assist the formation of personal beliefs; and aesthetic development, to promote an appreciation of the arts.
- 1.3 The school is a Roman Catholic foundation that welcomes pupils from all families who are in sympathy with its ethos and mission. Most pupils come from families with business, professional or farming backgrounds, living within 20 miles of the school. Most join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); additional pupils may enter classes from Year 1 upwards, if places are available.
- 1.4 There are 276 pupils in school at present: 16 boys and 23 girls in the EYFS, of whom 6 boys and 6 girls attend part-time; 118 boys and 83 girls in Years 1 to 6 and 18 boys and 18 girls in Years 7 and 8. The Pre-Prep building, new since the previous inspection, is for Nursery to Year 2 pupils. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups; no pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language (EAL). There is a wide range of ability represented. The ability profile of the school is above the national average overall. Twenty-six pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the EYFS and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage***

School	NC name
Cygnets	Nursery
Swans	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 Pupils' achieve well. They make good progress throughout the school to reach high standards by the end of Year 8, because the curriculum is good and teaching is effective. These features, along with extra-curricular provision that offers a wide range of activities, make a strong contribution to pupils' all-round development, in fulfilment of the school's aims. Awards to selective secondary schools show that music and sports are strong. Pupils with SEND achieve equally well through the supportive guidance given by the staff, but not all the teaching in the classroom is sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of the different abilities, including the able, gifted and talented (AGT) pupils.
- 2.2 The strongest fulfilment of the school's aims is evident through the high quality of pupils' personal development. From the EYFS and throughout the school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils speak with considerable maturity for their ages and develop very strong self-awareness and confidence because they are given excellent pastoral care. As a result, there is a very happy, friendly, family feel throughout the school. Every individual is well-respected and treated with great courtesy and care. Welfare, health and safety matters are addressed well. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most pupils expressed very positive views and showed strong support for all they are offered.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are good. Governors ensure the main pastoral aims are met fully. They provide caring and thorough support and challenge to leaders and managers at all levels, in the EYFS and in the rest of the school, monitoring teaching and learning well. The checking of some policies and detail in the compilation of the single register of staff appointments has not been as rigorous, although immediate action was taken that remedied shortcomings. The school has responded effectively to the recommendations of the previous inspection. Consequently, successful improvements have been made to teachers' marking and in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Plans are well advanced to develop some outside learning around the SSSI, in consultation with Natural England (the current government's advisor on the natural environment), but currently, the outside area is not used to the full to extend learning. Schemes of work have improved substantially, but plans lack the precision to challenge all abilities and enable the school to fully meet its aim for academic excellence. At management level, data gathering and tracking does not as yet enable quick reaction to pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan and checks on teaching by managers are not fully effective as tools to drive further improvement because targets, actions and success are not fully quantified. The school has excellent links with parents and the vast majority support all aspects of the school.

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

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

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Improve the effectiveness of systems to track pupils' progress.
2. Improve the match of learning tasks to ability in lesson planning.
3. Improve the effectiveness of whole-school monitoring and planning in order to identify agreed targets to enhance pupils' progress, and to ensure their successful implementation.
4. For all pupils, including those in the EYFS, make increased use of the outside area to support learning.



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

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

- 3.1 Pupils' achievements and learning are good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated. They develop good and improving levels of competence in literacy and numeracy. They read enthusiastically and very well. In fulfilment of the school's philosophy and aims, pupils are particularly articulate and confident, both with each other and when talking to adults. Throughout the school, pupils listen extremely well to each other. They develop strong logic, independence and creativity. They write cogently.
- 3.3 Outcomes throughout the school are good. Children in the EYFS are imaginatively creative in writing. They are active learners, enjoying all they do. They are beginning to think well and critically. As a result, by the end of Reception, most children reach a good level of development. They read simple texts and write in sentences using capital letters and full stops. In mathematics they add and subtract up to ten competently, have knowledge of two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes and can solve simple mathematical problems.
- 3.4 Pupils of all abilities absorb information well and ask sophisticated and well-considered questions. They persevere when faced with more demanding tasks. Pupils solve mathematical problems with good fluency and accuracy, and apply their knowledge and understanding of number across other subjects effectively. Good achievements in ICT are evident.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEND have good levels of achievement. The emphasis the school places on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem has led to pupils of all abilities achieving well in a range of sports and aesthetic activities such as art, music and drama. The under-13 cricket team have been Leicestershire county champions for the past four years. The under-11 hockey team reached the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools national finals in 2013.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010-2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at age 7 and age 11 are above the national average for maintained primary schools, with results in 2012 at age 7 and 11 being well above the national average. Results in standardised tests in English and mathematics indicate attainment that is higher than national norms. At age 13, attainment is high, as judged by pupils' work in books and lessons, and by their successful admission to selective senior schools. Some gain awards, including for sports and music. This level of final attainment, as judged, indicates that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, make good progress in relation to pupils with similar abilities. For pupils with SEND, including those with statements of special educational needs, this is achieved through strong additional support. Well-shared individual education plans (IEPs) offer increasingly difficult targets against which good progress is clearly evident.
- 3.7 Most pupils make good gains in their reading, spelling and numeracy skills. The more able and those with particular talents make the most rapid progress in those lessons where they are given high-level challenges. This approach and the opportunity for independent learning are not always consistently provided.

- 3.8 Pupils are enthusiastic, persevere with their efforts and enjoy school. Their resulting confidence helps them build worthwhile learning skills, including personal inquisitiveness and the ability to work in teams. This provides an effective backdrop that enables them to do well.

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

- 3.9 The quality of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 The curriculum offers all the required areas of learning throughout the school, and is suitable for all ages and abilities. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievements, and is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These augment the academic curriculum and offer pupils something for everyone. Linguistic, sporting and music clubs, brain games, a debating society and a 'cartoon characters' club are regular features.
- 3.11 In keeping with the school's aims, in the EYFS the happy, secure and caring environment fosters self-confidence among the children. The learning programme helps them reach expected levels of development and beyond. It meets the needs of all the children extremely well. Challenging, purposeful play is balanced between teacher-led and child-initiated learning activities.
- 3.12 In the rest of the school, the strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social and religious education in tandem with all aspects of literacy and numeracy, fully supports the school's aim to develop the whole person. This focus is strengthened by the vibrant choral, instrumental and performing arts tradition in the school that clearly inspires the pupils.
- 3.13 Pupils' linguistic skills are enhanced by opportunities to learn French, German and Spanish. History and geography supplement the suitable range of scientific and technological subjects. In response to recommendations of the previous inspection, planning and resources for ICT have much improved and planning is in hand for extended use of the extensive grounds to support learning. Working with Natural England, the school has drawn up plans, and begun to implement them, to rejuvenate its SSSI and to develop an outdoor classroom in the same area of the campus. When operational, this is intended to extend the outside learning opportunities for all, including the EYFS children.
- 3.14 Specialist teaching, including some in the EYFS, enhances the quality of learning in a range of subjects including art, music, drama and physical education. Great emphasis is placed on the pupils' physical development, in fulfilment of a key school aim. There is ample opportunity to play a wide variety of sports. The on-site swimming pool is used by almost all the pupils.
- 3.15 The curriculum is appropriately planned overall. Provision for pupils with SEND, including those with statements of special educational needs, is good. Pupils' difficulties are identified at an early stage and their needs are made known to teachers, who are involved in the provision of IEPs where appropriate. Pupils are grouped by ability from Year 3 onwards, helping to meet the different needs of each ability. More able pupils are provided with a special programme of additional activities which require greater challenge, but planning for day-to-day lessons does not consistently offer the academic rigour, for all abilities, to achieve academic excellence. Schemes of work have improved since the previous inspection, in response to a recommendation, although, as for day-to-day planning, not all identify the means by which the needs of pupils of different abilities are intended to be

met. The curriculum includes occasional themed days and weeks, which form the main conduit for cross-curricular work, but this aspect of planning is not fully developed.

- 3.16 Pupils' personal development benefits greatly from a good range of trips, residential visits and visitors, and links with the local and wider community. These include taking part in mathematics days with 40 local schools and participation in large-scale sports events.

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

- 3.17 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.18 The teaching enables the school to work towards its aim to promote intellectual and academic excellence. Teaching strongly promotes pupils' personal development, enabling academic progress. Staff and pupils throughout the school have highly positive working relationships which foster self-esteem, encourage excellent behaviour and promote a calm working atmosphere.
- 3.19 In the EYFS, staff have high expectations of the children and plan excellent activities based on their on-going assessments and their thorough understanding of learning for this age group. The teaching, by well-qualified staff, is engaging and motivating, meeting the needs of all the children well, and promoting an environment in which pastoral and academic development is nurtured.
- 3.20 In the rest of the school, in the great majority of teaching, brisk pace, excellent subject knowledge and clear learning objectives enable pupils of all abilities to acquire new knowledge and make rapid progress. At its best, enthusiastic and skilful questioning is employed that engages pupils' interest, promoting thoughtful debate and developing enquiring, independent learners. This was evident in a lower Key Stage 2 religious education session where pupils showed mature empathy with Mary's feelings in the story being studied. In sessions like this, pupils' thinking skills are extended, inspiring a love of the subject. In another example, older pupils were asked to find a solution to a very challenging mathematical problem. The very real sense of achievement on finding the solution was palpable, and spurred greater enquiry and interest.
- 3.21 Pupils with SEND are enabled to make good progress because the support they are given is enhanced by regular IEPs with increasingly difficult targets. Through this means and regular meetings with outside agencies, the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are fully met.
- 3.22 Resources are used effectively; interactive boards, alongside other electronic devices, visual resources, games and practical tasks all contribute well to providing stimulating lessons which foster strong learning and promote successful outcomes.
- 3.23 When teaching is less effective, plans to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities within the class are not precisely met; teachers' expectations are too low, and questions fail to stimulate pupils. Consequently, opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and make progress are limited. This is sometimes the case in classes that are set by ability.
- 3.24 Considerable improvement has been made since the previous inspection in teachers' written marking, in response to a recommendation at that time. Most

examples are comprehensive and informative, benefiting pupils, who are given clear targets as to how to improve.

- 3.25 Teachers monitor pupils' progress through regular standardised tests and assessments. These are used to inform staff how to allocate pupils to ability sets and the next steps in learning for pupils. However, at present, the organisation of this extensive data does not easily facilitate the monitoring of pupils' progress as they move through the school. For instance, starting points are not always clear and progress is not checked frequently enough. As a result, the school cannot be sure that all pupils always make the progress of which they are capable.
- 3.26 In their responses to the parental questionnaire, parents were very happy with the quality of teaching and enthusiastic about the quality of the education on offer.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. A tangible, happy and contented atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils are self-assured, mutually supportive and exceptionally polite. They show great empathy and consideration for one another and appreciate and respect each other's differences. They respond well to the extensive opportunities for reflection through the liturgical life of the school in the atmospheric chapel. Pupils show significant self-awareness and intuition. They can astutely perceive the humility and courage shown in many of the bible stories they consider. The thoughtfulness of pupils' responses in class and the quality of creative work displayed throughout the school reflects an obvious pride and sense of belonging.
- 4.3 A very strong moral awareness is evident in pupils throughout the school. Pupils have a fully developed sense of right and wrong which is developed from the earliest age in the EYFS. In class discussions they listen sensitively to, and respect the opinions of, others. Conduct and courtesy are exemplary. Pupils relish their roles of responsibility: older pupils spoke of how they were expected to be good examples to younger members of the community. A strong recognition of moral responsibility for the welfare of those less fortunate than themselves is evident from the range of local and world charities supported.
- 4.4 Excellent social awareness is evident in the ease with which pupils relate to each other and adults. In the EYFS, the youngest children respond fully to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment, sharing, taking turns and behaving extremely well. Children treat each other with respect and courtesy and make sensible decisions about, for instance, whether they need coats on to go outside. Older pupils refer to their year group as 'a little family'. They collaborate well and supportively. Pupils show excellent social understanding about the dangers of social networking and cyber-bullying. They show good understanding, for their age, of British democracy and institutions, drawn for instance from visits to the school by members of the European parliament and the local Member of Parliament. This understanding is further enhanced by school council elections complete with secret ballot after individuals have run 'campaigns'. It is an effective means for pupils to raise matters, propose initiatives and contribute to the decision-making processes of the school.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. They have a very well-developed awareness and appreciation of the traditions, beliefs and needs of a different cultural group through their work to support an orphanage in Malawi and through their charitable giving to a range of other causes. Whilst the Catholic ethos of the school is its fabric, pupils have a clear understanding and appreciation of other faiths such as Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism, as observed in work displayed. Pupils appreciate many aspects of their own cultural tradition as well as that of nearby European cultures, drawn through their work in French, German and Spanish, and such enterprises as the annual French language day and French boules tournament. Appreciation of music and art is broad through participation in musical activities and productions such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, pupils' personal skills are extremely well developed and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 The strong pastoral care provision benefits from a clear framework and the effective direction of pastoral leaders. Form teachers support individual pupils and monitor their happiness, their academic progress and pastoral development. Staff know pupils exceptionally well. Consequently, relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are very strong and supportive.
- 4.9 Throughout all sections of the school, healthy living is strongly encouraged. A wide range of sporting activities encourages regular exercise. Pupils spoke highly of the quality of their meals and of a strong awareness of the need to eat healthily.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, staff promote high standards of behaviour through good use of the 'key person' system. Praise and encouragement assist children to feel safe, and to develop positive relationships, treating each other with respect and courtesy. In the rest of the school, effective systems focusing on rewards, including merits and the 'golden book' are considered by pupils to be fair. Due consideration is given to any particular difficulties pupils may have.
- 4.11 Pupils are taught well about bullying and how to deal with it. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a very few pupils expressed a concern about bullying. Inspectors checked records and talked with pupils. Incidents are rare. Pupils confirm that if any bullying did occur, it would be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff.
- 4.12 A few questionnaire returns suggested that pupils' views are not considered by the school. Inspectors noted that there are many opportunities for pupils to express their views. The school council is an extremely effective group, passing on pupils' views and making sure they are heard and acted upon. Regular 'happiness questionnaires' seek information about pupils' sense of wellbeing, at the same time as providing a valuable opportunity for the school to monitor pastoral welfare.
- 4.13 By the end of the inspection, the school had a suitable three-year plan for improving accessibility for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.14 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.15 At the start of the inspection, a number of points were missing from the safeguarding and other policies. These were attended to immediately. The safeguarding policy is now a robust foundation for the effective procedures that were already evident throughout the school. All staff receive appropriate child protection training on appointment and at the necessary prescribed times.
- 4.16 In the EYFS and throughout the school, effective measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Risk assessments are carried out efficiently on a regular basis, to ensure that outings, equipment and accommodation are safe. Pupils are taught from the earliest age about keeping safe, for example, they use scissors and tools with due care and learn about road safety in the EYFS. Regular checks on equipment are carried out and recorded. Fire evacuation drills take place as required and detailed records are kept.

- 4.17 Appropriate policies for health and safety and first aid are available to parents and are well implemented. A good number of staff are trained in first aid, including those with paediatric qualifications specifically for the EYFS, to ensure that children's welfare is promoted effectively. Appropriately stocked and checked first-aid boxes are strategically placed in all buildings. Good medical care is provided in well-equipped accommodation which is available to all pupils. Strong links are maintained with local welfare agencies.
- 4.18 The health and safety committee meets termly. It audits all health and safety and welfare matters in the school and is responsible for overseeing the correction of deficiencies. It oversees safety management and maintenance procedures, and responses to accidents.
- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and stored for at least three years.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 All sections of the school benefit from governors' good oversight and their close attention to ensuring that the school is meeting its aims. Governors discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources efficiently because they know the school and its needs very well. One striking result of this efficiency is the new building which provides excellent resources for the 3 to 7 year olds.
- 5.3 Governors monitor the educational work of the school effectively. Regular, frequent visits made by the chair and other governors give staff in all sections of the school much confidence in governors' commitment to the support, challenge and stimulus for growth which they offer, formally and informally. The monitoring of the work of the EYFS is supportive and helpful but does not as yet focus sufficiently on the progress children make and their level of achievement.
- 5.4 Governors attend to their responsibilities well overall in the EYFS and throughout the rest of the school. They are fully aware of their responsibility to review and monitor required school policies and matters of welfare, health and safety. Much of this work is good, for instance, the comprehensive annual review of the safeguarding policy and practice carried out by the board. However, inconsistency in the monitoring of some practices and procedures, and in keeping up to date with requirements, allowed some slippage, resolved during the inspection:

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good.
- 5.6 The clear and distinctive direction provided by leadership at all levels, including in the EYFS, is reflected in pupils' overall good achievements and progress and their excellent personal development. This is made possible by staff members' exceptional care for individuals. Members of the leadership team work together closely and effectively. They are united in their keen sense of purpose, and give strong focused support to the school and its staff.
- 5.7 Senior leaders oversee the EYFS educational programme with equal focus. As a result, a happy, lively and purposeful atmosphere pervades all the EYFS areas. Good attention is paid to implementing the safeguarding arrangements in the EYFS so that the environment is welcoming, safe and stimulating. In the rest of the school, too, pupils' pastoral care and their personal development are high priorities and result in pupils' happiness and security, in keeping with the school's aims, and this contributes to their good overall achievement.
- 5.8 Whole-school documentation for safeguarding, and other policies, needed adjustment during the inspection to meet the requirements, and to match the school's existing good implementation. All staff, including those who have EYFS responsibilities, whether temporary, volunteer or on supply, as well as governors, are appointed through a rigorous process and criminal record checks are completed



and recorded appropriately. On appointment, all staff receive the necessary safeguarding training which is updated at appropriate intervals. A comprehensive handbook gives staff clear guidance on all welfare, health and safety and procedural matters, supplemented by further regular updates and training. Good induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines. The arrangements for newly qualified teachers meet all requirements.

- 5.9 The school knows itself and its strengths and weaknesses well. Plans for the EYFS reflect leaders' ambitious vision for continuous improvement. The whole-school development plan is a five-year projection but some of the priorities do not specify actions that need to be taken. In addition, the plan does not measure success clearly in terms of improvements in pupils' academic or pastoral achievement. This limits its effectiveness in helping the school fulfil its main aim to encourage academic excellence.
- 5.10 Leadership and management of teaching and learning in the EYFS is a strength. There are clear arrangements for the supervision of staff and for their professional development. However, information about children's progress is not smoothly integrated with data for the rest of the school. There, data gathering is currently an annual exercise and progress is not measured rigorously enough to enable quick reaction to any pupil who may be falling behind. The checks on teaching and the appraisal process are well established but for some staff, targets set lack rigour. Consequently, whilst all teaching is at least sound, not all teaching is good or excellent, and it does not take full account of pupils' differing needs within day-to-day lessons.
- 5.11 The extensive grounds and the premises, including a chapel, offer strong support for pupils' personal development. They are well maintained and offer some opportunities for exploration and reflection, although leaders agree that not all outside learning opportunities are provided for. The school is run efficiently due to the care and expertise of all staff, including those administration, catering, housekeeping, grounds and maintenance staff who work hard, sometimes behind the scenes, to support the pupils and teachers.
- 5.12 Links with parents and carers are excellent in all sections of the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaires parents expressed their confidence in the support given to their children and the open and easy communication with staff. They agree strongly that their children feel safe, happy and well cared for and were most satisfied with the progress pupils make, the provision of activities and the school's effective behaviour management.
- 5.13 The school regularly seeks and values parents' opinions on such issues as uniform changes and suitability of homework. Most parents feel that any concerns are handled quickly and well, and school paperwork confirms this. A suitable complaints policy is in place.
- 5.14 All parents, including those with children in the EYFS, are provided with many opportunities to become involved in the busy life of the school and in their children's work. They are welcomed to sporting, music and drama events, attend weekly coffee mornings at school, and are invited to weekly Mass and to help with school trips. The 'Dads' Football Club', 'Mums' Zumba' dance sessions and the mothers' prayer group all give additional opportunities for parents to feel an intrinsic part of the Grace Dieu community.

- 5.15 The parents' association holds many social and fundraising events and contributes funds to such projects as the newly resourced ICT suite and provision for outdoor learning. Detailed information is available to parents and prospective parents through the prospectus and website and current parents receive regular, informative newsletters and a termly magazine to keep them in touch with new initiatives and school successes.
- 5.16 Study cards, issued from Year 3 upwards, give a monthly update on attainment and all parents are able to discuss their child's progress with staff during bi-annual parents' evenings. Excellent written reports provide clear information about pupils' work and progress and include targets for improvement and the opportunity for parents to respond.

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