

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, and those schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent associations

INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO
SECTION 109(1) AND (2) OF
THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS ACT 2008**

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| Name of school: | Clifton Lodge School |
| DfE number: | 307/6066 |
| Inspection team: | Reporting Inspector: Tony Hubbard Supporting Inspectors: Eileen McAndrew Andrew Rickett |
| Dates of inspection: | 17-19 March 2015 |

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Clifton Lodge School

Address of school: 8 Mattock Lane, Ealing, London W5 5BG

Telephone number: 0208 810 3662

Email address: info@cliftonlodeschool.co.uk

Proprietor: Cognita

Head Teacher: Mr Floyd Steadman

DfE number: 101 955

Type of school: Independent school

Age range of pupils and students: 3-13

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full-time) Boys: 108 Girls: 32
(Part-time) Boys: 0 Girls: 0

Number of children under 5: Boys: 19 Girls: 8

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: Boys: 2 Girls: 0

Annual fees: £11,085 to £11,940

Type of inspection: Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Mr Tony Hubbard

Supporting Inspector(s): Mrs Eileen MacAndrew
Mr Andrew Rickett

Dates of inspection: 17-19 March 2015

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by SIS and the Cognita Group and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors, who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations.

Information about the school:

Clifton Lodge is an independent day preparatory school for boys and girls aged between three and thirteen years. The school was opened in 1979 as a proprietorial school and later became part of the Cognita Group of schools. It occupies a large Victorian detached house in a residential part of Ealing in West London. The present headmaster was appointed in September 2013 at a time of considerable turbulence for the school, as the third head teacher in two years. The school is overseen on behalf of Cognita by an Education Executive, who oversees a number of other schools in the group.

The school sets out to prepare its pupils for entry to local selective independent schools at the age of either eleven or thirteen, according to the age of intake of the school. Its syllabuses are based on the requirements of the Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB). Most girls leave at 11+, because of the entry requirements of senior girls' schools. At the time of the inspection no girls were in Key Stage 3. The school aims to help all pupils to achieve as much as they can both academically and socially, and to move to the next stage equipped with the necessary skills for future study and for "life's journey".

The school has 140 pupils on roll. These include 19 boys and 8 girls from 3 to 5, 68 boys and 24 girls from 5 to 11, and 21 boys from 11 to 13 years of age. There were 8 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 13 receiving support for English as an additional language (EAL). These include speakers of Japanese, Chinese, French and other languages. Its intake is not selective. The children come from professional and commercial backgrounds and a diverse range of cultures and faiths.

The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting for boys and girls from three to five years of age. It is divided into a Lower Reception for children from three to four years and Reception. The setting occupies an outbuilding shared with the Year 1 class. The school is divided into a Lower School, comprising Lower Reception to Year 3, taught mainly by class teachers and assistants; and Upper School, taught by specialist subject teachers. Following recommendations of the Ofsted report of 2012, modifications have been carried out to its outdoor and indoor facilities, and further modifications are at an advanced stage of planning.

Summary of main findings:

The quality of education provided is good and fulfils the school's aims in most respects. The Reception classes provide all children with a good start to their learning and development. The curriculum is broad and well designed to prepare all its pupils for successful entry to their chosen secondary schools. The quality of planning is good in core subjects like English, mathematics and French, but inconsistent in its detail in some other subjects. The quality of teaching is good overall and is particularly strong in literacy, numeracy and the expressive arts. Teachers know their subjects and the required examination syllabuses very well and pupils in most lessons are attentive, work hard and make good progress. In the best lessons the teaching challenges pupils to think independently and imaginatively, so that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Occasionally, learning is too focussed on factual information and does not sufficiently develop their ability to solve problems and work collaboratively. The presentation of written work, including handwriting, has improved since the last inspection. Work is regularly marked, although the quality and helpfulness of teachers' comments are uneven. The quality of pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are generally thoughtful, courteous and well behaved. Effective arrangements are in place to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. They are helped to appreciate fundamental British values and institutions. Arrangements for safeguarding, including background checks on staff are up-to-date and rigorous. The school is well led and managed in most respects and has steered the school successfully through a difficult period. It is successfully improving the quality of planning and recognises that this process is not yet complete. It enjoys strong confidence from parents. However, the balance of its attention has been too much on Upper School and on success in external examinations, with the result that some of its broader educational aims for independent thought and study have not been as fully addressed.

What the school does well:

- support for pupils whose home language is not English is good throughout the school;
- progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy is good;
- parents find the staff at all levels approachable and responsive;
- provision for pupils with EAL and SEND is very good; and
- The quality of singing is a strength of the school

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- provide suitable facilities for the care and medical examination of children who are unwell, close to a suitable toilet.

What the school must do to comply with the mandatory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school complies with the mandatory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Next Steps:

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that the planning in all subjects and areas of learning provides the detail already evident in the most effective;
- adjust the priorities for teaching so that there is a better balance between preparing pupils for entrance examinations and engaging their independent intellects and imaginations;
- ensure that marking consistently provides pupils clear guidance on how to improve;
- ensure all departments, including the Lower School and the EYFS provide improvement plans and that these are used to inform the school's improvement planning;
- in the EYFS further develop the children's ability to plan, carry out and reflect upon individual and collective activities;
- in the EYFS plan the development of understanding of the world in greater detail; and
- In EYFS secure links with outside bodies to moderate profile assessments.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Children in the EYFS enjoy a good start to their education through the well-planned programme of learning. Their transition from Reception into Year 1 is well managed, retaining the element of child initiated activity in and out of doors for that year. The curriculum is broad throughout the school and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum with the added dimension of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and religious studies. From Year 2 all pupils study French. In the Upper School, Latin adds further breadth and enrichment to pupils' learning, as well as being a useful basis for entry to some local independent secondary schools. Literacy and numeracy are consistently planned and are afforded high priority from the beginning of EYFS, so that pupils make particularly good progress in these areas.

Specialist subject knowledge strongly supports the curriculum provision. In the Lower School, pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 begin to make the transition towards the Upper School through specialist teaching in French, music, art, games, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The quality of singing is a strength of the school and the choir uses its skills and accomplishment in performances for assemblies and concerts within the school and the local community. About a third of the pupils benefit from instrumental tuition, including the piano, violin and guitar. The school has focussed on improving provision for sport and this has resulted in a good range of sporting and games activities, and has given many pupils the chance to compete in matches against pupils in nearby schools.

The school has been working over the last year to redesign and establish its curriculum so that it will be matched more precisely to the expectations of Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB). The requirements of the ISEB examination and pupils' ultimate success in these have so far been the dominant influence which has shaped the planning of the revised curriculum, with due account taken of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum, adapted, where appropriate, to meet the needs of the pupils and the ultimate expectations of the standards to be achieved by each year group more effectively. Planning has been approached methodically but is still work in progress and has concentrated above all on the Upper School. A common format has usefully been introduced, which has established some consistency across subjects. A yearly overview, which specifies the topics to be covered in each term, ensures balance and breadth in the provision. Medium term planning, which sets out in greater detail what will be taught and learned in each of the topics, is uneven in quality. The most effective examples, in English, Mathematics and French set out clearly what will be covered in each topic, the expected timing and some details of teaching activities, differentiation and resources. Other subject planning, particularly in the Lower School, is insufficiently detailed and the school is aware of the need for further development. In addition, issues such as differentiation to meet the needs of pupils of varying abilities are not always addressed precisely or consistently, and aspects such as opportunities for assessment, and cross-curricular links are not routinely identified.

Pupils' personal development has a high priority. The curriculum policy document gives high priority to "... the 'hidden curriculum' – what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave". The recently developed curriculum

for PSHEE has been carefully thought out to include a wide range of topics relevant to the needs of pupils and mindful of what schools are required to ensure in relation to pupils' personal development. The school's values and aims are fully reflected in the topics studied and strongly supported by the ethos of the school. Pupils' personal development is good and helps to ensure that they are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

Provision for pupils with learning needs or disabilities is effective and well-organised. It has been strengthened by the creation of a full-time post of an Inclusion Manager with overall responsibility. The newly established procedures are clear, understood by staff and communicated clearly to parents. Robust systems ensure intervention to identify and counter specific difficulties. Good quality support is tailored very effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils and begins with the expectation that all teachers will plan lessons to take account of pupils' differing needs. Where appropriate, additional one-to-one or group support, most usually in literacy, is given by specialist staff. Similarly well-targeted support helps pupils for whom English is an additional language to access the curriculum and make progress commensurate with their ability. The needs of more able pupils are also considered as part of the Inclusion Manager's responsibility. Where appropriate, particularly able pupils may be accelerated a year to help ensure that they are working at a level best suited to their capabilities. This strategy works effectively. The school recognises that some aspects of provision for more able pupils could be extended across the curriculum and has begun to review how this can be achieved.

The curriculum is well extended by a varied range of extra-curricular clubs designed to support the pupils' learning. Some of these offer additional optional support in specific subjects, and some, like those for sport, chess and debating, focus on other aspects of pupils' skills and interest. These activities foster the aims of the school by developing further the whole child and contributing to lifelong learning. The school makes effective use of its location to plan visits that support and extend the curriculum and bring the excitement of first-hand experience to pupils' learning. Art galleries, museums and historical sites help to bring immediacy and depth to their knowledge and understanding as well as increasing their appreciation of British and wider culture. Residential visits for pupils in the older classes add the dimension of new experiences shared in a different environment, learning to work together while increasing individual independence and self-reliance.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of the teaching is good and enables most pupils to make good progress in lessons and in their learning over time when assessed against standards set by ISEB. The teaching ensures that pupils acquire good subject knowledge and understanding in core and foundation subjects, which enables them to achieve well in their entrance examinations. The introduction of more rigorous assessment procedures in 2013 has given the school more reliable data that shows pupils have made at least good progress over the last two years from their starting points.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. The specialist teaching gradually introduced from Year 2 upwards gives pupils a good broad understanding of the core content of those subjects. Pupils use the knowledge that they have acquired to good effect in their subject lessons. They sometimes have opportunities to use this knowledge to make links between subjects. Lessons are generally well planned with a clear purpose, understood by the pupils. Teachers explain their topics clearly and most make their lessons interesting and enjoyable. Pupils say that they like the individual attention that small classes afford them. Lessons are suitably organised,

although pupils are mainly taught from the front of the class and relatively little use is made of paired or group work, so that the opportunity for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning during lessons is often limited.

Common features of the most effective teaching are the opportunities given for pupils to explore their own learning through enquiry and so to achieve a deeper understanding of the concepts being studied. Pupils respond to these experiences with enthusiasm and eagerly join in discussions that challenge their own perceptions and those of others in the class. These lessons run at a brisk pace and keep all pupils engaged and focused on the learning outcome. Teachers use their skills in questioning to challenge and extend the pupils' understanding. In an exciting mathematics lesson the teacher challenged pupils to extend and apply their already strong existing knowledge and understanding in new and experimental ways. Such high quality learning is relatively scarce at present, in large part because of the pre-occupation with preparing pupils for success in ISEB examinations, sometimes at the expense of the school's broader vision of learning. Similarly, work set in some lessons consists excessively of the completion of worksheets.

The strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy gives pupils secure foundations for all aspects of their academic learning. They show a secure grasp of grammar and punctuation, and regular comprehension exercises help them to develop the skills to answer questions accurately. Pupils are highly articulate and listen intently. There are adequate opportunities for pupils to use these skills in creative ways that explore how they express themselves in response to their learning in subjects such as English. The school has responded well to the recommendation to improve the presentation of pupils' work. The specific time allocated to handwriting has improved presentation in Years 2 and 3 and has enabled pupils to develop a good cursive style. Work throughout the school is generally more neatly presented. Younger pupils have a firm grounding in arithmetic and this is developed as pupils make good progress in mathematics as they go through the school.

Pupils' written work is regularly marked. At its best marking shows pupils how to improve their work and move forwards, so that they understand why they have been given marks and can explain what makes them different from another grade. This quality of marking is not consistent across the school. The majority of marking in both core and foundation subjects consists of comments that support and praise the pupil's efforts but do not precisely define their achievement or help them move forward in their learning. The introduction of individual learning targets for pupils in February 2015 has yet to become an embedded part of teaching and learning, able to contribute to the tracking of pupils' progress and reflected in planning.

Assessment procedures have improved over the last two years and are now more robust. In English, mathematics and science in particular they are regularly undertaken with results recorded. These results, along with attainment in foundation subjects, are reported to parents three times each academic year. The regular assessment of individual pupil attainment against the standards of ISEB gives teachers a secure understanding of where individual pupils are in their learning and greater comparison with external benchmarks. Pupils, and their parents, speak positively about the extent to which they are aware of how well they are doing according to these examination criteria. From the data available over the past two years, progress is good overall and is high in mathematics. Almost all pupils achieve ISEB expectations in core subjects at the end of Key Stage 1, while approximately half achieve higher levels. A significant number of pupils make good progress from their starting points in English at the end of Key Stage 2 by achieving

levels that are slightly above ISEB expectations. Nearly two-thirds of pupils in Key Stage 2 attain standards that are above expected levels in mathematics. Pupils in Key Stage 3 achieve well in English and mathematics. The great majority of pupils gain admission to their preferred secondary schools and leave thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils' personal development is treated as an integral part of their whole education. The expressed aims and values of the school and its ethos support pupils' growth into thoughtful, courteous and considerate individuals. Religious studies help pupils to understand the dimension of the human spirit, and high quality achievement in singing, for example, contributes strongly to their appreciation of the creative and aesthetic. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are encouraged and developed through the way they are treated by staff who, from the Early Years, support, encourage and celebrate all aspects of their development.

Pupils' moral development is good. They have an increasing understanding of right and wrong fostered by the explicit values of the school and supported by the curriculum, school policies and assemblies. Pupils' behaviour is good and they relate harmoniously to one another showing consideration and care in their everyday relationships. The school has re-organised and re-equipped the playground since the last inspection and there was now no sign of the rough play that had been noted at that time. Work in PSHEE develops awareness that making moral choices is not always easy, alongside an understanding of their growing responsibility to make such choices. In discussions with inspectors, pupils mentioned their appreciation of the house system and points for good work which act as an encouragement to try hard for themselves and for their House.

Pupils' social development is good. They enjoy school and arrive on time and ready to work. At all ages, including in the EYFS, they work productively with each other. When given the opportunity, they collaborate well and are able to listen to each other's views, wait their turn and learn from one another. Older pupils accept responsibility as prefects and house captains with a strong role in helping other pupils to behave well and observe the rules of behaviour, thereby contributing to the settled and secure atmosphere for learning. Competitions and sporting fixtures give pupils opportunities to meet pupils from neighbouring schools and to compete using their IT skills and accomplishments in areas such as the '*Language Perfect*' global competition where they competed successfully with pupils around the world. These activities give valuable opportunities for pupils to move out safely into the wider community contributing to their growing social experience and understanding. Pupils regularly use their skills in the expressive and performing arts in concerts for their parents and the local community. They are swift to respond to the plight of those in need by raising funds for a number of national charities.

Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils benefit from a school community rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, in which children from different heritages and home languages mix and make friends harmoniously. The curriculum strongly supports pupils increasing knowledge and understanding of the achievements of British and

other cultures, past and present. Through their study of the beliefs, traditions, holy books, places of worship and festivals of the various the major world faiths, pupils develop a tolerant knowledge and understanding of their own and others' ways of life and thought.

The school sets out its aim to promote British values in its policy documents and fulfils this commitment effectively. Pupils learn about government and public services. In the Lower School they learn about the work of the police and fire and rescue service as an introduction to the structure of modern-day Britain. Pupils from Year 2 have an opportunity to vote for a form representative on the School Council, experiencing at first-hand how a democracy works in practice. In Year 8, pupils visit the Houses of Parliament learning how the nation conducts its decision-making through its elected representatives. Closer to home, pupils attended a course '*Your Life, Your Choice*' giving them valuable insights into the Law in action. They attended a range of absorbing, informative and thought-provoking talks from the police, the youth offending team and took part in a workshop on the work of magistrates. The school is careful to ensure that all visitors who come to give talks to pupils are carefully chosen and their contributions are discussed fully to ensure that partisan political views are not promoted or discussed. The curriculum, particularly in PSHEE and citizenship broadens to include topics such as democracy, the law, human rights, prejudice and discrimination: difficult concepts which engage and challenge older pupils while helping them to become increasingly thoughtful, well-informed young people.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school pays close attention to all aspects of the pupils' welfare, health and safety. It complies with the requirements of the regulations, as it did at the time of the last inspection, and provision is good.

Safeguarding pupil's welfare is at the centre of the school's ethos. All staff have received appropriate training in the latest guidance for safeguarding. This is reviewed and refreshed at regular intervals by the local authority. This ensures that it is up-to-date and effective. The designated safeguarding lead and deputy are senior staff in the school who are both trained to a higher level and have a thorough knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection matters. The school has clear policies relating to safeguarding and child protection, which are implemented effectively and known to all staff. The school has established a good relationship with the local authority and other external agencies. An external audit of provision has ensured that some areas for improvement that were identified have been fully addressed.

Registers are taken electronically and checked twice a day. Absences are closely followed up and monitored on a daily basis. The school has very effective procedures in place to ensure that all children are looked after throughout the school day and clear strategies for informing parents of any concerns. Arrangements to raise awareness of Internet Safety among pupils and their parents are thorough.

Relationships throughout the school both among pupils and between pupils and staff are good. Pupils are polite and generally show care and concern towards each

other. The pastoral support given to pupils is at the forefront of how the school responds to pupils with special needs or concerns about their wellbeing or learning. The school has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy and works hard to ensure that pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take. Through regular anti-bullying weeks, assemblies and lessons, pupils learn about and have opportunities to discuss bullying. Adults in school take bullying seriously and respond vigilantly to tackle and eliminate bullying. While pupils acknowledge that unpleasantness can sometimes occur, they feel that they can approach members of staff with confidence.

The school keeps an appropriate record of incidents of misbehaviour and sanctions applied. Sanctions are proportionate and applied fairly. Incidents are followed up promptly by senior staff and resolutions recorded. The electronic recording of these incidents makes it difficult to retrieve information readily and use it to monitor patterns.

The health and safety policy is comprehensive and implemented effectively in ensuring pupils' safety in school and on off-site visits. Risk assessments are thorough and cover all areas of school premises, including specialist areas such as the science room, as well as off-site visits including school trips and regular visits to a local school to use their sports facilities. The arrangements for ensuring fire safety are excellent. Staff are well trained in fire safety and regular checks made to alarms and equipment are appropriately recorded, as are the termly fire drills. Records pertaining to the medical treatment of pupils are very good. The school has an appropriate written First Aid Policy and first aid boxes are well-stocked and readily available around the school. All staff have received emergency first aid training with additional training in paediatric care undertaken by staff in the Early Years. A trained first aider is always available on site and accompanies school trips.

Pupils learn how to stay fit and be healthy through assemblies, lessons on SMSC, Science and PE. The school serves nutritious lunches that always have vegetarian and salad options.

The school meets the requirements of equalities legislation and has a clear accessibility plan in place to ensure that any reasonable adjustment is made to sensitively support pupils with disabilities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 4 - Suitability of the staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has robust systems for ensuring that all the required background checks are carried out before appointments are confirmed. It has also required all its staff to confirm annually that they are not subject to any relevant concerns. DBS checks are renewed every three years, although this is not a requirement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The accommodation is suitable. It meets the requirements of the school and is conducive to learning. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of improvements to the school site that have improved the quality of the accommodation and grounds. The extension to the Lower School accommodation provide for the currently adequate space for the children. The improvement to the outside play area has made an impact on the quality of play at lunch and morning break time. Pupils say that play time is now less rough because the clearly defined areas for ball games and areas for more calm activities make the outside space more organised.

The building has appropriate toilet and washroom facilities and an adequate supply of drinking water provided by two fountains on the playground. The arrangements for the treatment of the short term care of pupils who are sick or need medical treatment, including examination, are not appropriate, because they are too far from the nearest toilet and also does not provide adequate privacy should a medical examination be required.

The overall decoration is adequate. Rooms are mostly light and well ventilated. Colourful displays in classrooms and corridors create a bright environment. The specialist art and science rooms are well equipped. The outside area is suitable for some PE and games activities. The school uses nearby sports venues for games, with suitable shower facilities. External lighting is provided to ensure the safety of people entering or leaving the school. Regular checks are made of the premises to make sure that they are maintained to a standard that meets, as far as is reasonably practicable, the welfare, health and safety of the pupils.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No

What must the school do to comply with the regulations?

- provide suitable facilities for the care and medical examination of children who are unwell.

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

The school ensures that parents are well-informed with a wide range of good quality, clear and useful information. The website gives a brief but engaging insight into the life and work of the school. It serves as both an introduction to prospective parents and a source of comprehensive details for those who wish for more specific information on the schools ethos, aims, curriculum, organisation and supporting policies. The fortnightly newsletter keeps parents in touch with the daily life of the school. The headmaster writes about current matters of interest or particular school events accompanied by photographs of interesting work in progress. Reports celebrating the academic, sporting, creative or recreational endeavour and success of individuals and groups of pupils show parents how much their children's achievements are valued. The introduction of a school Facebook page has been a very successful innovation. It allows immediate communication between school and home and is particularly welcome when pupils are away on residential visits, when news of their activities can be swiftly communicated. All teachers are available by email so parents have the reassurance of swift access to staff.

The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and the quality of education it provides for their children. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their teachers and receive a report card for the autumn and spring terms with a more detailed written report on each subject at the end of the year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school's policy for complaints fully meets the requirements. There were no complaints during the last year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 8 - The quality and effectiveness of leadership in and management of schools

The school is well led and managed. Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the efficiency of the school, its teaching and welfare and its approachability and responsiveness. Several praised the way in which the headmaster has stabilised the school and set it on a path to improvement after its period of turbulence.

Leadership is largely successful in ensuring that that its aims are met. It has promoted good standards, and is successfully developing and improving teaching. Management is well organised and responsibilities are well understood and generally effectively carried out. Administration is efficient. Policies and procedures are detailed and take full account of compliance with the regulations. They are effectively implemented and kept under review. Leadership, supported by the Cognita's education executive, is vigilant in auditing compliance, particularly in relation to the safeguarding of children. Leadership and management have a clear vision for the direction and ethos of the school, which is understood and shared by all staff, who show confidence in their leadership.

Procedures for quality assurance are becoming established and include both observation and book scrutiny. These are linked to staff appraisal and professional development, although this process has not yet run through its first year. Senior leadership have a clear and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The strategy for improvement is clear and made effective by specific targets, with defined accountability for their successful completion. In the circumstances, leadership's concentration on the Upper School and on improving success rates in the ISEB examinations and in entry to senior schools is understandable, but has tended to detract from its attention and that of some of its staff from the school's broader educational purpose of promoting independence and reflection. Moreover, leadership have tended to concentrate on the Upper School, as shown by the fact that while there are development plans for each subject department and for the department for inclusion, there is no development plan for the Lower School, including the EYFS. Leadership has recognised that this needs to be addressed, and the addition of the co-ordinator of Lower School to the senior leadership team is a good start. Many changes and improvements have been

introduced in a short time with some success, particularly in relation to improvements in planning and assessment. Leadership is aware that that in many cases there is further to go.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

SECTION C: EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality and standards of the Early Years' provision

The quality and standards of the early years' provision are good. Practitioners enable children to make good progress in almost all areas of learning, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The majority of the children meet national expectations by the end of the reception year. Some exceed these expectations and continue to develop their literacy and mathematical skills and knowledge ready for the transition into Year 1. Children with EAL, and SEND are sensitively supported and cared for, while those ready to move forward receive full encouragement. The children enjoy their time at school and show that they feel secure and happy. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS, including the required background checks on staff, are fully met. Leadership and management are satisfactory. They support the good progress and welfare of the children well. Its quality assurance at the level of teaching and assessment is effective, but is not drawn together into a robust overall evaluation to support an improvement plan. Management is successful in engaging with parents and carers as partners in their children's development. It has made satisfactory progress in responding to the recommendation in the last report.

How well the Early Years' provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The early years' provision meets the needs of the range of children well. Most children reach the expected levels of development by the time they are five and many exceed them. Pupils make particularly good progress in their language skills, including literacy and numeracy. They speak well and develop good phonic skills from an early stage. In Lower Reception children enjoy writing their names into the register and gradually develop their ability to write legibly for themselves and to read letters and then words with growing confidence. Children with English as an additional language rapidly gain in proficiency and become integrated with the class. Children acquire secure number skills, such as counting to 20 forwards and backwards in Lower Reception and make a start with simple fractions in Reception. Pupils' aesthetic development is good. Their physical development is good, and benefits from the school's provision of equipment for the outside area in response to the recommendations of the last report. Development in understanding of the world is satisfactory. They have a good sense of time, such as the passage of the seasons and physical changes that accompany it, but are less familiar with the physical processes that lie behind it because scientific exploration receives less emphasis in the planning. Children now engage in more self-initiated activities both inside and outside the classroom, and gain in confidence and autonomy. The organisation and management of child-initiated activities have also improved since the last inspection, so that pupils learn to share and collaborate, although there is room for further improvement in ensuring that pupils plan and reflect upon the success of their choices and use of resources. Practitioners have appropriate expectations for the children and manage behaviour sensitively but firmly. As a result children are engaged and attentive. Their development is well supported by good links between school and families, who are welcomed into the setting and receive regular and frequent information about their children's progress.

The contribution of the Early Years' provision to children's well-being

The staff of the EYFS make sure that all the children feel secure, safe and eager to learn. The children show trust and confidence in their key workers and teachers. A child in Lower Reception, weeping in the arms of a grandparent at the beginning of the day, was gently drawn in to the class and was soon beaming with pleasure. They evidently enjoy their time. They form emotional attachments and learn to consider the feelings of others in the carefully safe environment of the EYFS. They are well behaved and learn to share and to respect the feelings of others. Children are able to choose and undertake tasks independently, although planned collaborative play is less well developed. A good balance is struck between

vigorous exercise, indoors and out, in all weathers, and quiet time for relaxation. Snack times and meal times are friendly and civilised occasions and the children become used to a healthy diet, also promoted well through the curriculum. They make good progress with personal hygiene. Excellent links between Reception and Year 1 smooth the transition from early years to more formal school. This is helped by the continuation into Year 1 of child-initiated activity. Suitable arrangements for safeguarding are in place.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years' provision

The leadership and management of the EYFS setting is satisfactory overall. They ensure that all the learning requirements are met for all children, including those with EAL and particular learning needs, although planning for understanding of the world needs to be improved. They promote and safeguard children's well-being effectively. There is a clear and simple structure of management, understood by all. Roles are fully understood and in most respects effectively carried out. Teachers plan and review their teaching constantly and the quality of their practice is supported by a clear system of monitoring, appraisal and professional development. However, this work is not being drawn together into an overall self evaluation and improvement plan. The recruitment and support of staff in the department is good. Assessment is appropriate and linked to immediate observation of children's activities, although this could be improved by more effective recording of children's actual words in different situations, and at present, the profile assessments are not being moderated. There are strong links with parents.

Does the school meet the mandatory requirements?

Yes

The EYFS setting should:

- further develop the children's ability to plan, carry out and reflect upon individual and collective activities;
- plan the development of understanding of the world in greater detail; and
- secure links with outside bodies to moderate profile assessments.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent associations. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk