



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
SUNNINGHILL PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Sunninghill Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Sunninghill Preparatory School		
DfE Number	835/6029		
EYFS Number	EY444085		
Registered Charity Number	1024774		
Address	Sunninghill Preparatory School South Court South Walks Road Dorchester Dorset DT1 1EB		
Telephone Number	01305 262306		
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Email Address	office@sunninghill.dorset.sch.uk		
Head	Mr A Roberts-Wray		
Chair of Governors	Mr Richard Miller		
Age Range	0 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	195		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed 104 boys; 91 girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	16	5-11: 112
	3-5 (EYFS):	33	11-13: 34
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Catherine Springett		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	20 May 2014 to 23 May 2014		

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 January 2011.

This inspection was conducted to assess the suitability of Sunninghill Preparatory School for membership of Independent Association of Prep Schools. It follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school.

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, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, 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. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors/the proprietor/a governors' representative/governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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

Mrs Pamela Leech

Mr Michael Hewett

Mrs Sally Hobbs

Mrs Gillian Bilbo

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Head, IAS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sunninghill Preparatory School is a day school for boys and girls from the ages of three months to thirteen years. Sunninghill's vision is to be a school where everyone feels valued and where all pupils are inspired to achieve to the best of their ability. Through its curriculum, the school aims to create in its pupils a passion for learning and striving for excellence together with gaining an understanding of how to become responsible citizens actively helping each other. It sets out to create a vibrant cohesive school community with a family ethos, which encourages strong moral and spiritual beliefs based on Christian values. It currently has 195 pupils on the roll, 104 boys and 91 girls, including 49 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.2 The school was founded in Dorchester in 1939 and moved to its present location in 1997. It is owned by a charitable trust, established in 1993, and governed by a board of trustees. The premises have been extended and the grounds include an outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts and playing fields. Extra facilities have been gained to accommodate whole school events and sports fixtures by the acquisition of a long-term lease on the parish hall which borders the school site. The Nursery has also been extended by the addition of Fledglings, which caters for babies from three months to two years of age. Since the previous inspection in January 2011, a new chairman of governors has been elected. The EYFS, which is referred to by the school as the Foundation Unit, is housed in the old stable block and now comprises Nursery and Reception classes for children aged three months to five years. Sunninghill joined Dorset Area Schools Partnership (DASP) in 2011 as the only independent school of 19 local schools.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the school as indicated by standardised tests, is above the national average. Pupils leaving at the age of 13 gain places in senior independent schools both boarding and day, or transfer to a local maintained secondary school. The majority of pupils are of white British origin. Many belong to families in professional occupations and with strong local business connections. In total, 41 pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 40 are provided with learning support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and nine have English as an additional language (EAL). The school has also identified 20 pupils who are gifted and talented and provided with support.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Fledglings 0 – 2 years 9 months	Nursery
Nursery 2 years 9 months – 4 years	Nursery
Reception 4 – 5 years	Reception

Pre-preparatory / Preparatory

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 1
Form 2	Year 2
Form 3	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4
Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6
Form 7	Year 7
Form 8	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school aims to inspire in its pupils a love for learning and to help them achieve to the very best of their ability. In this the school achieves a large measure of success. Pupils in the EYFS make an excellent start although there are limited opportunities for free flow activities for the youngest pupils. Throughout the school pupils develop a sound understanding of basic skills and achieve high standards in English particularly in reading. They are confident with numbers, applying their understanding competently to science subjects and problem solving. The curriculum offers a wide range of subjects and has been extended to include many opportunities for independent thinking and open-ended tasks in response to a recommendation made in the previous report. The curriculum is well supported by an enrichment programme and a broad choice of extra-curricular activities. Music and drama feature well and art is especially strong. Pupils are well known as individuals and make good progress overall because of effective teaching. More able pupils are identified and offered extension activities while those with SEND are carefully supported. Lessons are planned to allow all pupils to make progress and this is checked by regular assessments. Pupils are competent users of information and communication technology (ICT) but this resource is not well used in all subjects. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. They apply themselves well and participate with confidence in classes. They are beginning to develop the skills they need to assess their own learning but this is not yet fully integrated in their learning.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' development is excellent and fully reflects the caring family ethos which pervades the school community of staff and pupils. Pupils respect each other and their teachers and are proud of their school. They are keen to contribute to their community and take their responsibilities seriously both within their forms and as prefects. The standard of behaviour is excellent. Pupils know they can turn to staff if they have any concerns and are well supported by a high level of pastoral care. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the school works hard to promote the wellbeing of its pupils.
- 2.3 Governance is highly effective and governors offer a wide range of local expertise in addition to a broad depth of experience. They are highly supportive of the school and generous with their time. They discharge their legal responsibilities effectively and maintain excellent oversight across the school. New management structures are in place and allow senior leaders more time to prioritise tasks and this fully meets a recommendation of the previous report. Staff appraisal is effective. The process for the safe recruitment of staff and procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. Pupils' educational and pastoral needs are fully supported by the comprehensive procedures for assessment and tracking. Links with parents are excellent.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Extend the already good practice seen in using ICT across the curriculum to all subjects.
 2. Further support pupils to take control of their own learning by helping them to develop greater skills in self-assessment.
 3. Increase the opportunity for free flow of activities inside and outside for the youngest pupils in the EYFS.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated and demonstrate a willingness to take responsibility for their own learning in accordance with the school's aims to inspire a love of learning and a spirit of creativity. They are lively and articulate, listen attentively and express their opinions confidently. They reach high standards in reading, well supported by parents and benefiting from a literacy programme which focuses on developing a passion for literature. They are able to write fluently in all subjects across the curriculum and develop a competent understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and are able to apply logical and mathematical understanding to scientific subjects. They use basic skills in ICT lessons competently but do not routinely incorporate these into their work in other subjects.
- 3.3 Pupils are creative and imaginative in their artwork, as demonstrated in the high standard of displays around the school. They are able to think logically and work independently, for example, in a science lesson when pupils were testing crisps and peanuts to measure energy release. Pupils demonstrate maturity and a sense of purpose when working co-operatively. Pupils are encouraged to acquire skills needed for effective independent learning but lack the opportunity to carry out active self-assessment. Pupils undertake sports and other physical activities with enthusiasm.
- 3.4 Many pupils receive individual tuition in drama and music, achieving high standards in examinations. A number enter local and regional competitions in poetry, art, writing and public speaking and join ensembles, orchestras and choirs organised by the local schools partnership. Pupils participate in an extensive range of sports and inter-school sports competitions, achieving notable success at national level in gymnastics.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Pupils' attainment is good in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. Results from the national tests at the age of seven in 2011 to 2012 are well above the national average for maintained primary schools. Writing results overall have also been well above the national average. At the age of 11, results from national tests have been above the national average for maintained primary schools. English results are better overall than those for mathematics. All pupils are successful in gaining entry to secondary schools of their choice and some achieve scholarships. Comparative statistics are not available for attainment at age 13, but on the basis of evidence from pupils' performance in lessons and work scrutiny it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations.
- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in relation to their ability, as seen from the results of the school's own tests and analysis of lessons, discussions with pupils, and from scrutiny of their work. Careful planning and individually-tailored programmes of study enable pupils with SEND to make excellent progress. Pupils who have EAL are increasingly confident in their use of English. More able pupils extend their understanding and learning by the school's identification arrangements and the opportunities provided for them within and beyond the curriculum.

- 3.7 Pupils of all ages have constructive attitudes to learning and relish the challenges of working independently as well as with each other. They have good work habits, apply themselves well and show great enjoyment in their learning.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum is highly effective in its coverage of the requisite areas of learning. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs and it fully supports the school's aim to provide pupils with a balanced and broad curriculum. This provides an experience of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education, which prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges of life outside and beyond school. The curriculum covers National Curriculum and Common Entrance subjects with the addition of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious studies. Linguistic skills are enhanced by the teaching of French, delivered by a subject specialist. Pupils are also prepared for scholarship examinations to independent schools in academic subjects as well as sport, music and drama. The curriculum prepares pupils very well for entry to senior schools in both the independent and maintained sector and is set out in excellent schemes of work. The comprehensive PSHE programme, coupled with the innovative Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PeLTS) programme for the development of a range of life skills, provides an excellent basis for the pupils' personal development. Provision for developing ICT skills is excellent but the use of ICT is not yet fully embedded in schemes of work for all subjects.
- 3.10 Throughout the school, pupils with SEND and EAL are identified successfully and their needs are met well by the excellent one-to-one support and by individually modified work within the classroom. The provision for more able pupils within the classroom is excellent. A register of those considered to be able, gifted and talented also records the wide range of extra-curricular activities made available to challenge and support these pupils.
- 3.11 An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is available for all pupils from Reception upwards. These include a comprehensive programme of outdoor education activities as well as a large number of daily clubs sessions. Many outside-school activities provide strong links with the community. For example, the local schools partnership allows pupils to participate in gifted and talented days, food technology events and cross-school musical and sporting events, while links with local sports clubs further the aspirations of those with a competitive nature. Many links have been forged with local and international charities. Pupils from Year 8 organise and deliver harvest festival hampers to care homes, while on a larger scale, all pupils are actively involved in UNICEF's Day for Change. Pupils in Year 8 also work in partnership with local organisations to present their own business plans.
- 3.12 The curriculum is strengthened by a programme of day and residential trips, visits and workshops. Enrichment days extend pupils' learning, as was seen when original artefacts were brought into school for pupils to handle and discuss during a talk about the First World War. Pupils of all ages benefit from visits to school by local professionals and people from different cultures. Their academic work is also enhanced by trips to places of interest such as local villages to study their history and geography or as a source of inspiration for artists. Trips to places such as Stratford upon Avon provide curriculum support for subjects such as English, as well as inspiring young actors. The programme of residential trips provides a graduated

series of experiences that support outdoor education as well as opportunities for the development of the personal, learning and thinking skills that the school is embedding in its overall curriculum provision.

- 3.13 Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, the overall expansion of curricular and extra-curricular activities has created many more opportunities for independent thinking and open-ended tasks.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.

- 3.15 Teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school to encourage independent learning. Teaching is generally well planned and inspires pupils to contribute their own ideas. Pupils are stimulated academically, engaged in their learning and make good progress. Collaborative work is encouraged at every level. Teaching is successful in supporting pupils with SEND and EAL as well as the more able. Highly effective and regular assessments enable staff to check pupils' progress and monitor their learning. In a small number of cases, lessons lacked pace or did not encourage pupil participation and pupils were less engaged during these.

- 3.16 Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. A wide variety of teaching methods ensures that pupils' differing learning styles are accommodated, which is supported by a wide range of learning resources. For example, in a history lesson on Henry VIII, trying on a crown and cloak helped pupils to engage with the subject and facilitated their questioning which was to form the basis of their research. Lessons have clear and attainable learning objectives which help pupils monitor their own progress as lessons unfold. Tasks tailored to each pupil's needs and support from teaching assistants ensure that pupils from all ability groups have opportunities to make good progress.

- 3.17 There are strong positive relationships between pupils and their teachers. Responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils said they are well supported and make good progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has integrated the PeLTS programme into planning and delivery of all curriculum subjects to stimulate the involvement of pupils in their learning. Marking is effective with constructive comments which help pupils improve their subject understanding. Regular and focused assessment ensures that pupils are aware of their progress and learning targets, although pupils remain tentative in their use of self-assessment, which is a key facet in the PeLTS programme.

- 3.18 Although a few pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teachers are not fair in the way they give rewards and sanctions, inspectors saw that praise and encouragement were used effectively and rewards were given fairly. Records show that sanctions are appropriate and consistently applied. A minority of respondents said they did not think homework helped them learn, however, homework was seen to provide opportunities for pupils with differing needs to reinforce the day's learning or to research topics more independently. Most pupils said their teachers helped them learn and all were highly appreciative of the help their teachers give them.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 This supports the school's aim to create a community where each individual feels valued and respected, and learns to respect and be kind to others. Through their personal development pupils at all ages are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 4.3 Pupils of all ages and backgrounds develop a high degree of spiritual awareness. A positive Christian ethos permeates the school and results in an open and welcoming community. Pupils are confident and self-aware, demonstrating emotional maturity and with a firm grasp of the importance of life's non-material aspects.
- 4.4 The quality of pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and standards of behaviour are high. The youngest pupils accept and respect the rules that guide their day-to-day behaviour. Older pupils are emotionally mature, open and friendly with each other. Pupils appreciate the effectiveness of the tutor system and acknowledge that the reward systems, including 'well-done' certificates and praise assemblies, contribute to their understanding of right and wrong. Older pupils understand their role in being role models for younger pupils so that all contribute to the well-being of their school community.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. There is a strong sense of family and community apparent within the school which can be seen in daily routines and interactions between pupils, and between pupils and staff. The pupils accept responsibility readily, looking after younger pupils or helping run charity events and stalls at fairs. They provide excellent communication routes giving opinions on such things as school food or development planning. They develop team-building and leadership skills, often through the PeLTS programme or outdoor education programmes and buddying partnerships through mixed-age lunchtimes and house meetings. Pupils of all ages support local and national charities by fund raising and volunteering. Pupils appreciate aspects of political and civil awareness through their own elections for house captains as well as visits to the local courts.
- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are accepting of those who are different from themselves and the school is a tolerant and harmonious community. Pupils learn about and understand faiths and cultures that differ from their own, but are also aware of those of the Western cultural tradition. They participate in an extensive range of musical, dramatic and artistic opportunities within and outside the curriculum. Musicians play in concerts and pupils take part in drama productions in school and participate in community events. Wall displays demonstrate the pupils' awareness of richness within other cultures, for example in the artistic interpretation of other nations' indigenous cultures.
- 4.7 By the time pupils are ready to leave the school they have excellent and mature standards of personal development.

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

- 4.8 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.9 Highly dedicated staff work hard to fulfil the school's aims to provide a caring, supportive community and pupils thrive in the welcoming atmosphere. Staff know their pupils extremely well and individual pastoral needs are effectively monitored and supported by the strong pastoral structure that underpins daily routines. Form times enable staff to offer support to pupils, which is both understanding and insightful. Parents say their children are well looked after and are highly appreciative of the care their children receive. Relationships between staff and pupils, and among pupils themselves, are strong.
- 4.10 A small minority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel that the school encourages high standards of behaviour. Inspectors noted that pupils' behaviour around school and in all ages was exemplary with regular instances of good manners, courtesy and respect for each other and their teachers.
- 4.11 A minority of parents expressed concerns about bullying. Pupils, in discussion and through their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, were adamant that bullying was not tolerated. An examination of school records confirmed their view. Pupils say they like being at this school and know who they can turn to for help and advice.
- 4.12 Healthy eating is encouraged through the provision of a well-balanced, nutritious and attractive range of home-cooked dishes at lunchtime. All dietary needs are met. Pupils take advantage of the excellent opportunities for regular exercise through playtime, clubs and a wide range of sporting activities.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.14 Pupils articulate their views successfully through formal systems as form captains and school prefects. A few respondents to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not think the school sought and responded to their opinions but inspectors found that pupils have many opportunities to contribute their views.

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

- 4.15 The quality of welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 The school makes excellent arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorous. Excellent systems for training staff in child protection matters are undertaken by a senior member of staff in conjunction with the local safeguarding board; correct procedures are in place and implemented thoroughly. Every effort is made to minimise the risk to pupils of fire with regular risk assessments and fire drills carried out and correctly recorded. Fire alarms are tested weekly with appropriate records stored. Electrical appliances are regularly tested and records kept. Risk assessments for buildings and grounds are updated annually and are comprehensive. There are plenty of conveniently sited toilets with hand basins and suitable changing rooms all appropriately designated for boys or girls. Drinking water is available at all times of the school day.

- 4.17 Premises are clean and well maintained and pupils benefit from the school's pleasant grounds, with opportunities for outdoor play, games and studying nature in the outdoor learning environment or the enclosed pond.
- 4.18 Admission and attendance records are suitably maintained and stored and there are efficient systems in place to check absentees. Appropriate policies are implemented to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils in school and on educational trips and visits. Pupils who are unwell are appropriately cared for until they can be collected by parents. A high number of staff have received training in first aid and those with responsibility for younger children have received paediatric first aid training.

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 brings to the school a wide range of expertise and experience. All governors offer strong links with local businesses and enterprises. A few have long associations with the school and all are vigorous in promoting the school's vision and aims. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- 5.3 Through active financial and education committees, the governors maintain highly effective oversight of the school, ensuring a stable financial base for investment in resources, facilities and high-quality staffing. Governors have acted decisively to fulfil the recommendation from the previous report by restructuring senior management and by the appointment of a deputy head, which enables senior managers to focus more effectively on school development. A comprehensive and detailed development plan reflects the school's vision for the future.
- 5.4 Governors have an excellent insight into the working of the school. Frequent discussions with staff, regular visits to classrooms as well as school functions, and close attention to reports from senior managers enable governors to provide much valued support, challenge and stimulus for improvement. All governors are well known to staff and accessible to parents.
- 5.5 Governors are meticulous in discharging their responsibilities for child protection and welfare, health and safety throughout the school. Stringent procedures for staff appointments are correctly applied and recorded and all governors take part in an annual review of the safeguarding policy and practice.

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, is excellent.
- 5.7 Highly effective leadership, well supported by a strong management structure, enables the school to fully meet its aims to provide an education which encourages pupils to value and take control of their own learning. As a result pupils achieve good standards, develop excellent personal qualities and feel safe and happy at school. There is clear educational direction. Management strategies that focus on meeting individual's educational needs have resulted in thorough provision for pupils with SEND, EAL and for the more able pupils, promoting their learning and achievement.
- 5.8 A small minority of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that the school was not well led or managed. The inspection team found that a clearly defined management structure enables senior managers to have highly effective oversight of academic and pastoral matters. Heads of department routinely monitor standards of teaching and learning by observing lessons and through careful systems for evaluating pupils' ability and progress. Staff receive regular appraisals and benefit from the many training opportunities provided. Induction training for new staff is well managed. Strong lines of communication between staff allow senior managers to

plan effectively for the future development of the school. The efficient tutor system contributes positively to the welfare of pupils, promoting very high levels of pastoral development.

- 5.9 Rigorous systems ensure the recruitment of suitable staff and all staff receive thorough and regular training in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Policies are effective and properly implemented. The school is diligent in carrying out checks to ensure the suitability of governors, staff and others as required.
- 5.10 The school promotes excellent relationships with parents. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that parents are happy with the amount of information they receive and in interviews during the inspection, parents expressed their appreciation of the nurturing and caring environment, which ensures that their children are happy and safe at school and are well looked after.
- 5.11 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They enjoy accompanying school trips and reading stories to the younger children. They are encouraged to join the parents' association, which organises social events and school fairs. Funds raised support the work of the school and contribute to local charities.
- 5.12 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints policy. Parental concerns are addressed promptly and with care and consideration, therefore, most can be resolved informally to the satisfaction of all parties. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of parents said that the school did not always respond quickly to concerns. In discussions with inspectors, parents said they found the staff to be approachable and valued the school's open door policy as a means of resolving day-to-day issues quickly. Examination of records showed communication between staff and parents to be thorough and prompt.
- 5.13 Regular newsletters, a high quality prospectus, the school's website and email messaging provide helpful information about the work of the school for both current and prospective parents. Strong links with the community include the introduction of a twice-weekly parent and toddler group held at the school.
- 5.14 Formal written reports are sent home twice a year throughout the school and parent interviews provide further information about the children's progress and targets for improvement. Pupils in Years 3 to 8 are awarded half termly effort grades which are sent home. In interviews during the inspection, parents said that reports demonstrated how well the school knew their children and that they found the targets to be useful guidance for helping at home.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 6.1 In meeting the needs of the children who attend, the setting is outstanding.
- 6.2 Effective planning of educational programmes ensures that all children reach expected levels of development for their age in the prime and specific areas of learning.
- 6.3 The carefully designed balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities for older children provides richly resourced and stimulating opportunities for independent learning choices, enhanced by free flow to the outdoor learning areas. Staff carefully plan to meet the individual needs of the youngest children, however, in some sessions, the range of ages present can limit the opportunities for independent learning choices. During sessions when the age range is more limited, children benefit from one-to-one attention, for example, a toddler enjoying outdoor activities with her key person and chatting while having her morning snack.
- 6.4 The curriculum is enhanced by imaginative use of the school grounds, exciting role-play areas and visits to local markets, parks and the library. Specialist teaching and a wide range of extra-curricular activities further extend the learning opportunities.
- 6.5 Older children are fully involved in the planning of their learning. New topics begin with assessment of initial knowledge and the sharing of first ideas.
- 6.6 Secure staff knowledge of individual developmental needs is demonstrated in the consistently good practice observed across the setting. Exemplary assessment procedures, which include the youngest children, systematically track each child's progress against the early learning goals and guide the planning of future learning. Strong provision for pupils with SEND and help from outside agencies ensure that children's needs are fully met. Two-year checks are carried out and the results discussed with parents.
- 6.7 Learning journals provide a memorable record of each child's progress, enhanced by slips to share and celebrate home events.
- 6.8 Carefully devised teaching strategies ensure that every child can access the curriculum, for example in a Reception literacy lesson, the discovery of letters from a fairy in the school grounds led to imaginative replies on recording sheets matched to each child's skill level. In Nursery, a game with names in a bag helped children to gain confidence with their phonic skills.
- 6.9 In interviews and a pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed their strong support for the school. They particularly appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities and high standards of behaviour displayed by children. Parents are fully informed about their child's progress and appreciate the open door policy to solve immediate concerns. Many opportunities exist for parents to take part in school life and they are encouraged to join the parents' association.

6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 6.10 The contribution of the provision to children's well-being is outstanding.
- 6.11 Warm relationships with the key person ensure that even the youngest children feel happy and secure. The introduction of talk cards for Reception ensures that children know exactly what to do if they have concerns.
- 6.12 Staff consult closely with parents to follow the daily routines of the youngest children and are alert to their every need, for example, regular checks of sleeping children and respecting children's likes and dislikes.
- 6.13 Staff promote good behaviour by displaying respect for each other. They clearly enjoy their roles and are fully engaged in the children's learning at all times, ensuring a quality experience for each child in their care.
- 6.14 Rigorous adherence to health and safety procedures ensures that the children are safe at all times and that they understand emergency routines.
- 6.15 Children are encouraged to be independent, for example, peeling a banana at snack time and putting on their aprons for baking. Outdoor activities provide opportunities for gross motor development and controlled risk taking, for example, walking on the blocks in their obstacle course during free play. Practice in fine motor skills is included in many activities, for example, picking up raisins with tweezers. Water is always available and healthy home-cooked lunches, served by key people, provide a balanced meal in sociable surroundings. Children are encouraged to adopt good table manners, always remembering to say thank you for their food.
- 6.16 The youngest children enjoy playing in their own secure play area and exploring the wider environment when this is possible. However, despite careful organisation by dedicated staff, the labour intensive nature of ongoing tasks such as food preparation and nappy changing can limit the opportunities for children to have free choices of activity and for individual learning needs to always be fully met.
- 6.17 Children are very well prepared for their transitions. Joint play sessions and the excellent buddy reading scheme for Reception and Year 1 prepare the children for their move to the next class. The school assessment system and meetings between staff ensure that starting points are clear for each transition. The adoption of learning styles modelled on the good practice of the EYFS eases Reception children into Year 1.

6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 6.18 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding.
- 6.19 The dedicated EYFS governor provides highly effective support for the setting, ensuring that the learning and development requirements of the EYFS are fully met and that policies and their implementation are regularly reviewed.
- 6.20 Thorough risk assessments and strict adherence to recruitment procedures, supported by excellent teamwork between all staff, provide a secure and stimulating environment for work and play. Staff induction procedures include all necessary training in child protection and health and safety to ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met.

- 6.21 Exemplary assessment procedures systematically record individual children's achievements. Inclusion in local training and moderation exercises provide a baseline for self-evaluation and the opportunity to share good practice. Since the previous inspection, provision of regular non-contact time enables managers to carefully monitor the success of their sections as part of the setting's self-evaluation process and establish realistic targets for improvement.
- 6.22 All staff contribute ideas to departmental review and for inclusion in the whole school strategic plan, for example, linking PeLTS with learning characteristics in the Foundation Unit.
- 6.23 Focused supervision meetings provide the opportunity for teaching assistants to review the progress of their key children and to receive support to address any concerns. The well-established system for performance management review for all staff sets personal targets and supports personal initiatives and requests for training.
- 6.24 Strong partnerships with parents and consultation with external agencies ensure that children's needs are fully met.

6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 6.25 The overall quality and standards of the setting are outstanding.
- 6.26 All children, including those with SEND, make excellent progress relative to their ability and starting points, with almost all achieving, and many exceeding, the early learning goals by the end of the EYFS.
- 6.27 The youngest children settle quickly and happily joined in with songs and learning to make animal sounds. They are well supported to achieve their next developmental goal, for example independent walking or learning to feed themselves. They are encouraged to choose their activities and enjoy painting and playing imaginatively with small farmyard animals.
- 6.28 Children in Nursery confidently select name cards and most can write their names for self-registration. They used their sparkly fingers to count to ten and counted on to make sixteen. They enjoy mark making in different media and used simple tally charts to record their successes in an outdoor numeracy session. They work well together in their 'Let's explore sessions' and helped each other to log on to their tablet computers and use directional programming to move a teddy around a grid.
- 6.29 Older children apply their developing phonic awareness to their free writing and can use simple punctuation. Many demonstrate fluent reading skills and write confidently in a range of genres, for example, sequencing the stages of the lifecycle of a frog. They display competent computer skills, enthusiastically working towards their 'computer driving licences' and using educational programmes to select shapes to draw houses. Working with their 'chatting chums', they accurately described two dimensional figures so that they could choose the correct cutter for their biscuits.
- 6.30 The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. They make friends readily and show genuine care and respect for each other. They learn how to share with each other and thrive in the warm, caring atmosphere.
- 6.31 All staff understand fully the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare and these are met effectively.

- 6.32 Since the previous inspection, non-contact time for the leaders of the EYFS setting has been increased. A continual self-evaluation provides suggestions for improvement, for example, by increasing parental involvement in children's learning by inviting them to share topic work.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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

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