



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ABINGDON PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Abingdon Preparatory School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Full Name of School       | <b>Abingdon Preparatory School</b>   |
| DfE Number                | <b>931/6095</b>  |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>1071298</b>   |
| Address                   | <b>Abingdon Preparatory School<br/>Josca's House<br/>Kingston Road<br/>Abingdon<br/>Oxfordshire<br/>OX13 5NX</b> |
| Telephone Number          | <b>01865 391570</b>  |
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| Email Address             | <b>school.sec@abingdonprep.org.uk</b>  |
| Headmaster                | <b>Mr Crispin Hyde-Dunn</b>  |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>Mr Adrian Burn</b>  |
| Age Range                 | <b>4 to 13</b>   |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>249</b>   |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Boys</b>  |
| Numbers by Age            | <b>4-5 (EYFS): 10    5-11: 174<br/>11-13: 65</b>   |
| Head of EYFS Setting      | <b>Ms Linda Gaskell</b>  |
| EYFS Gender               | <b>Boys</b>  |
| Inspection Dates          | <b>10 Nov 2015 to 13 Nov 2015</b>  |

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI standard inspection was in January and February 2011.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for children aged under two), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mrs Jane Chesterfield | Reporting Inspector                        |
| Mr David Price        | Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)   |
| Ms Finola Stack       | Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school) |
| Mrs Rosamund Walwyn   | Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years    |

# CONTENTS

|  | Page      |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>(a) Main findings</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>(b) Action points</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| (i) Compliance with regulatory requirements  | 3         |
| (ii) Recommendation for further improvement  | 3         |
| <b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| (a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning   | 4         |
| (b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils) | 5         |
| (c) The contribution of teaching   | 6         |
| <b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| (a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils  | 8         |
| (b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care   | 9         |
| (c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety  | 10        |
| <b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| (a) The quality of governance  | 11        |
| (b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians                   | 11        |

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Abingdon Preparatory School is a day school for boys aged from four to thirteen years. It is situated in a rural location, near the town of Abingdon in Oxfordshire. The school was founded in 1956 in Oxford and was originally known as Josca's. It moved to its current site in 1970. Having merged with Abingdon School, it became part of the Abingdon Foundation in 1998. This is a registered charity, operated as a limited company and directed by a governing body.
- 1.2 The school aims: to offer a stimulating and balanced curriculum to all pupils within a nurturing and supportive environment, in partnership with parents; to develop well-rounded individuals who are confident and polite; to promote academic excellence supported by outstanding subject-specialist teaching; to provide a broad range of co-curricular opportunities inside and outside the classroom; and to foster outstanding pastoral care and a strong sense of community.
- 1.3 The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision to children in its Reception class. There are currently 249 pupils on roll, 10 of whom are in the EYFS. The present headmaster was appointed in April 2011, and the current chair of governors took up post in April 2013. The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average overall, with a notable proportion of pupils in the upper years being of well above average ability. Pupils come from mainly professional or business backgrounds. A small proportion are from minority ethnic or international backgrounds.
- 1.4 Twenty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and the majority of these receive specialist support from the school. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Eighteen pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom currently requires specialist support from the school.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims of promoting academic excellence and a stimulating curriculum in a nurturing and supportive environment. Pupils' achievement is exceptional, both inside and outside the classroom. This includes the EYFS. They reach unusually high standards and make rapid progress through the school, displaying outstanding attitudes to learning. Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities for all ages. This means that all pupils have the chance to develop their interests and discover their strengths. The EYFS children have an excellent educational programme. Throughout the school, teaching is excellent. Teachers know their subjects and pupils very well, and tailor lessons effectively to enthuse them and meet their needs. Occasionally, written feedback to pupils does not make clear their targets for improvement.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They have a strong sense of self-awareness, an interest in the world around them, and a keen sense of right and wrong. Pupils are eager to take on responsibility and make a contribution to the school community and the wider community, and they understand the nature of British society and the values it espouses. They show respect for others and their differences. All pupils, including those in the EYFS, are well prepared for their next stage of education. Pastoral care for pupils is excellent, due to the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and the carefully organised systems for ensuring pupils' well-being. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent, and staff at all levels give this high consideration at all times.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is excellent. Governors have a detailed insight into the workings of the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Leadership and management are also excellent. The school's leaders have ensured that all recommendations from the previous inspection have been comprehensively tackled. The EYFS provision is now excellent in all respects, and subject leadership has now been strengthened, enabling inconsistencies in curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation to be addressed. School leaders drive the school forward with a clear vision for the future, expressed in a coherent school development plan, and are joined by staff in a shared sense of purpose. The thorough systems for monitoring and evaluation of the school's work ensure that leaders are fully aware of the school's strengths and its areas for development. Parents are extremely satisfied with the school and what it offers their children. They feel that staff are very approachable and keep them involved and informed as partners in their children's education.

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

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

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Develop greater consistency and clarity in feedback and target setting for pupils, so that they always understand what to do next to improve their work.



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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 The outcomes for children in the EYFS are excellent. The children make rapid progress relative to their individual starting points. They learn to explore and investigate a wide and imaginative range of resources and use these to be creative, to think critically and to engage in imaginative role play, such as driving a fire engine towards the scene of a fire. Children rapidly assimilate the sounds that make up words. They are learning to form letters with their fingers in a variety of media and to use pencils to write simple words. They can all recognise simple numerals and count to 10 accurately, and many can count to 100 with support. They show good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, control a mouse confidently and use a paint programme to create pictures. The children are able to express themselves creatively through music and drama, showing sustained concentration, progress and enjoyment. Those with SEND are well supported by staff, so that they achieve similarly to their classmates. By the end of their time in Reception, all children have usually reached the levels expected nationally and some have exceeded expectations in several areas of the EYFS curriculum.
- 3.3 Throughout the rest of the school, pupils achieve at an exceptionally high academic level, while at the same time developing outstanding skills in an extensive range of other activities. This is in line with the school's aims of developing well-rounded individuals who are confident and polite. Pupils listen highly attentively and speak coherently. They have an extensive vocabulary, well in advance of the expectations for their age, and know how to match language to the right context. Year 4 pupils, for example, understood how to write in the style of the early 20th century as they wrote in their First World War diaries that they were 'baffled' by the outbreak of war, or 'tickled pink' to win a game of football. Pupils are fluent readers, and older pupils know how to scan text highly effectively for relevant information. They think logically and offer original and imaginative ideas. Pupils' creativity is exceptionally strong, and this is especially evident in their art and their design technology work. For example, they used sewing machines adeptly to produce 'emoji' pillows. Pupils have an excellent grasp of mathematical and ICT skills, which they are able to use across the curriculum.
- 3.4 Outside the classroom, pupils enjoy being active and excel at a range of sports. School teams perform well in rugby, football and cricket matches. Pupils achieve notable success at local, county and national level in sports including fencing, cross-country running and biathlon. Many pupils show an outstanding talent for music. More than half the pupils at the school take instrumental lessons, including piano, guitar, wind instruments and violin, and participate in music groups of a notably high standard. These include choirs, wind, jazz and brass bands, and guitar groups. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities means that pupils of all ages are able to explore and discover activities where they can achieve success, from toy brick construction to gardening, and karate to internet radio programming. Many pupils achieve excellent results in drama examinations and show particular confidence in public speaking and debating.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the inspection evidence available from school data, work scrutiny and lesson observations, it is judged to be consistently well above national

age-related expectations, and often exceptional. Almost all pupils are successful in gaining entry to their first choice of senior school, many of which have demanding entry requirements. Around 75 per cent of Year 8 pupils gain places at the highly selective senior school each year, and a significant number of pupils are awarded scholarships. Pupils make rapid progress through the school, from their arrival as eager and curious Reception children to their departure as mature and confident members of Year 8. Pupils identified as having SEND or EAL also make excellent progress, as a result of the quality of the individual support they receive. Those who are more able are offered a level of challenge to enable them to excel and reach the high levels of which they are capable.

- 3.6 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They quickly assimilate what is expected of them, settle quickly, follow instructions and undertake their tasks without fuss. They are able to apply themselves highly conscientiously to their work without adult supervision, decide what resources they need to use to support their learning and discuss their work with their classmates. Pupils put a great deal of effort into their tasks, and take pride in presenting it as well as they can. They leave the school with excellent study skills to equip them for their senior school careers, and feel pleased with the progress they make.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 In the EYFS, the very broad and well-balanced curriculum is carefully planned to make excellent provision for all areas of learning, using both indoor and outdoor areas highly effectively. It ensures that almost all children reach the expected levels of development, and that the needs of all are met. Since the previous inspection, the outside resources and facilities have been developed and extended so that there are excellent opportunities for the children to express themselves, follow their interests and develop their skills. The well-planned adult-led activities are carefully managed and introduce the children to specialist teaching in swimming, drama, music and physical education. There is also a weekly 'mini-foresters' session which takes full advantage of the extensive school grounds.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, an excellent curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning and is notably effective in meeting the school's aim of providing stimulating and balanced activities. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs, and successfully prepares pupils for entry to their future schools. The curriculum provides a wide range of subjects that effectively advance the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The organisation of the curriculum makes a strong contribution to the pupils' progress and achievements.
- 3.10 There are regular lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) for all year groups. Pupils learn about relationships, finance, key aspects of life in modern British society and other faiths. Knowledge of other faiths is also taught in religious education and through assemblies, for example a class presentation on Diwali. Provision for the creative subjects of art, design technology and music is very strong. Coverage of political topics is presented in a balanced way.
- 3.11 The provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent. Individual or small group support is used effectively to ensure that these pupils make significant progress. The needs of the more able pupils are well catered for through the use of specialist

teaching and a scholarship class. The school's achievement in preparing pupils for highly selective senior schools highlights the success of this aspect of curriculum provision.

- 3.12 In response to a previous inspection recommendation, the leadership team has worked closely with heads of department to monitor and review curriculum planning. These reviews have resulted in the introduction, for example, of the 'mini-foresters' outdoor programme for Reception and increased English teaching in Years 3 to 5.
- 3.13 There is much evidence of planning matched to the needs of individuals, leading to pupils of all abilities making excellent progress. In a very few cases, activities to support pupils with SEND and to challenge the most able were not identified in medium-term plans. The recent introduction of a detailed guide now helps staff to identify the most able pupils and provide activities that support their needs.
- 3.14 The extra-curricular activities on offer through the 'Other Half' term-time programme and the summer academy programme are exceptionally strong. The school goes well beyond its aim to provide a broad range of co-curricular opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils greatly appreciate the exemplary range of clubs, including sport, drama, music and art, which add interest and breadth to the curriculum. The curriculum is also enriched by visits from outside organisations, for example involving a day spent by Year 6 on problem solving in science.
- 3.15 Educational visits are an integral part of school life and are carefully planned to support and enrich areas of the curriculum. Regular trips include outings to local farms and to an environmental centre to explore habitats, and a residential language visit to France. These trips encourage personal development, promote teamwork and increase an awareness of the wider world.
- 3.16 The school has strong links with the local community, including visits to nearby churches. Grandparents are invited to an afternoon tea hosted by the pupils. Charitable fund raising is well established, with support given to a wide variety of organisations. A silver coin foot trail raised money for a local children's charity.

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

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, adult-led activities are calmly and enthusiastically delivered, and are highly effective in engaging and motivating the children. An extensive range of excellent resources is used to stimulate their curiosity and instill a love of learning. Thorough systems are in place to facilitate accurate assessment procedures, so that each child's individual learning needs can be addressed in a highly effective way. Adults have an excellent understanding and knowledge of the EYFS curriculum and know how to use resources in order to promote learning for children of all abilities, both indoors and outside.
- 3.19 Teaching throughout the school is highly effective in supporting pupils' progress, in line with the school's aims to promote academic excellence, supported by outstanding subject-specialist teaching. Throughout the school, teaching is well planned, and teachers' knowledge of their pupils is a significant factor in providing for their learning and achievement. Detailed schemes of work help to ensure that all pupils make significant progress, as a result of the improvement in this area since the previous inspection. The quality of marking has improved, and the marking policy now requires the setting of targets for improvement. However, this is not

always applied consistently. Some subjects use self-assessment sheets for pupils effectively, enabling them to identify strengths in their work and areas for improvement.

- 3.20 The subject knowledge of staff is excellent and this is especially evident in specialist teaching. Lessons are well organised and interesting, which supports the pupils' learning. Management of time is generally strong and the pace of the lessons means that all pupils make significant progress. Assessment is used effectively to inform future learning.
- 3.21 In questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils indicated some dissatisfaction with the amount and quality of homework set. Evidence from the inspection did not support this view. Homework is judged to be proportionate to the age and ability of the pupils, and is appropriate for pupils to achieve the standards required for entry to their senior schools.
- 3.22 An excellent range of resources throughout the school is used effectively to enhance the curriculum and support pupils' learning. Interactive whiteboards in all classrooms are used to stimulate and inspire pupils, in line with the school's aims. Pupils have weekly computing lessons where they learn about internet safety, basic programming and control technology. Tablet computers are also being used effectively to support cross-curricular learning.
- 3.23 Teachers have excellent rapport with the pupils, which encourages a high level of application. Pupils are very appreciative of the support they receive from their teachers and identify this as a key factor in helping them to make progress. Excellent questioning skills are used effectively in the majority of lessons to support, encourage and challenge all pupils. Pupils are often given opportunities for independent learning, which enable them to increase their individual understanding and make excellent progress.
- 3.24 The needs of individual pupils are well met. In the older years, ability grouping and the scholarship class are used effectively to support the requirements for pupils of differing abilities. A specialist learning support teacher ensures that all teachers are aware of the educational needs of those pupils with SEND or EAL. Effective support for these pupils is provided through individual or group intervention programmes. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect, and provides balanced political views and a mature understanding of modern British social values.

## **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 In the EYFS, the children play very well together, and they have an excellent understanding of each other's different backgrounds and needs. They enjoy coming to school and are able to make independent choices about their play, their learning and their behaviour. They learn to use basic courtesies such as 'please' and 'thank you', to take turns, to share, to co-operate and to be considerate to one another. They also learn about British values and the school rules, and the significance of following and supporting these during activities such as 'circle times' and playtimes.
- 4.3 Older pupils said in discussions that they feel that by the time they leave the school, they have been prepared well to move on their senior schools and the next step in their own personal journey. Pupils throughout the school are responsible and respectful. They have a sense of purpose and self-confidence, reflecting the positive ethos identified in the aims of the school.
- 4.4 The development of the pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. The school has a Christian ethos but welcomes pupils from all faiths. Pupils value the opportunity that assemblies provide for reflection, such as the recent Year 6 Diwali assembly which included the personal spiritual experience of pupils from Hindu and Sikh backgrounds. The stimulating rural setting of the school is greatly appreciated by the pupils; this was commented upon by those in the gardening and eco-club. Music, drama and other creative arts are celebrated within and beyond the curriculum, enabling pupils to engage with the aesthetic aspects of their lives.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate an excellent standard of moral development. They have a firm sense of right and wrong, developed through the PSHCE curriculum, which is reinforced in all aspects of school life, and can support their ideas with considerable reasoning skills. The prevailing culture within the school is one of mutual respect and consideration. Pupils appreciate the qualities of fairness and integrity. Year 8 pupils enjoy being role models for younger ones, while all pupils value the importance of friendship and of being kind to one another.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent. They practise the school's values consistently and enthusiastically, and apply them effectively in their relationships with their peers and teachers. They respect other people and accept responsibility for their own behaviour, displaying outstanding care and concern for the needs of others. Close relationships amongst pupils were regularly seen during lessons and extra-curricular activities. Achievement and success are celebrated around the school. Older pupils enjoy the chance to be given positions of responsibility, such as house captains, sports captains and elected members of the school council. This promotes interaction between the age groups. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need for rules and of the place of civil and criminal law in English society, and show respect for democracy and individual liberty. They have a secure knowledge of distinctive English institutions, such as Parliament. Charity work is significant in the school, with pupils showing enthusiasm and creativity in their ideas for fund raising.
- 4.7 The pupils have excellent cultural awareness, encouraged by the different communities represented within the school. They demonstrate tolerance of beliefs

that are different from their own. A distinctive whole-school Armistice Day remembrance occasion exemplified pupils' understanding of loss, sacrifice and supporting others, and further encouraged awareness of British culture.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, adults work closely and sensitively with the children's families to ensure a smooth and secure start to school life. Children quickly establish positive relationships with the 'key person' who cares for them and so they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They particularly enjoy the many opportunities they are given to use the outdoor areas for physical exercise and they all learn to eat a healthy and balanced diet. Parents are able to speak to staff at the beginning and end of the school day and are kept well informed about their children's behaviour, growing independence and any particular needs.
- 4.10 A coherent and well-structured system of pastoral care is in place throughout the school. All pupils are looked after with care and compassion. The activities of the four houses play a large part in reinforcing a sense of community and identity amongst the pupils. Staff know their pupils well and are very responsive to their individual needs. Relationships at all levels are excellent. An in-house counselling facility, 'the listening service', is available to all pupils.
- 4.11 The school successfully promotes a healthy lifestyle. In their comments in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions, some pupils indicated dissatisfaction with the food provided. Inspection found that school lunches are freshly prepared and nutritious, and include a range of healthy options, although some of the choices offered do not always appeal to pupils.
- 4.12 Good behaviour is promoted through a clear system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils feel strong ownership of the school's guidelines on good behaviour and they fully understand its high expectations. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses and discussions, a very small minority of pupils stated that some teachers are not always fair regarding rewards and sanctions. Inspectors found that the school takes this seriously, but that pupils feel that a demerit that cancels a hard-earned merit is unfair. Pupils report that the school has rigorous measures to guard against bullying. The school demonstrates particularly strong monitoring and oversight of the bullying policy. Records are carefully kept, and prompt and helpful action is taken if required.
- 4.13 A small minority of pupils, in their questionnaire responses, did not feel that their views are sought or acted upon. Inspection evidence showed that the school is effective in seeking pupils' views through the school council. Pupils confidently put forward suggestions to be discussed at the school council, particularly relating to school food and playground activities. However, they would welcome greater responsibility and more scope for action within the school council.
- 4.14 The school has suitable arrangements in place to ensure continued improvement in educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 In the EYFS, children's welfare is promoted extremely effectively, and there are excellent systems in place to monitor the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is carefully and sensitively promoted, and all staff are vigilant in supporting the school's policies and procedures and in monitoring absences, and are alert to the risks of radical viewpoints. The children's outdoor role play indicates that they are learning to respect one another's differences, keep one another safe from harm, and empathise with the feelings and needs of others.
- 4.17 Throughout the school, safeguarding arrangements have due regard to official guidance. Efficient implementation of detailed policies and procedures promotes pupils' safety, with rigorous attention to detail. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and have undertaken child protection training as required. The designated safeguarding lead is well known to all the staff and pupils. There are effective links with external agencies. Detailed notes are kept of any incidents, and procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff are followed rigorously and recorded carefully.
- 4.18 The school pays meticulous attention to all aspects of health and safety. Working in conjunction with the senior school ensures that an extremely well-qualified team of well-informed staff effectively oversees all aspects of health and safety. Equipment and appliances are tested regularly and efficient records are kept. There are detailed risk assessments for activities both in and out of school, including residential trips.
- 4.19 The school gives excellent attention to the risks from fire and other hazards, carrying out regular risk assessments. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and staff receive informative and up-to-date training. The premises are tidy and well maintained.
- 4.20 For pupils who are ill or injured, and for those who have SEND, the school has clear and effective procedures, and suitable day accommodation. Medicines are stored securely, any accidents or injuries are recorded and parents are informed. Staff are appropriately trained and a generous number of them have first-aid qualifications.
- 4.21 The school's admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and stored, in line with requirements. Attendance registers are taken promptly at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions, and absences are followed up systematically and without delay.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors have an excellent oversight of the school, including the EYFS. Through their effective committee structure they make sure that the school fully meets its obligations for educating pupils to a high standard, through judicious financial planning and wise investment in human and learning resources. They share a well-defined vision for the future improvement of the school and have a detailed grasp of its priorities. They meet regularly with the leadership of both schools in order to co-ordinate strategic planning and set common goals for future development.
- 5.3 The governing body provides the school with a wide range of expertise and experience, but has particular strengths in its understanding of education. It offers the school the necessary combination of well-informed support and challenge. It has an excellent insight into all aspects of the school as a result of the quality and breadth of information it receives. Governors visit the school regularly, attend events, carry out lesson observations, and maintain a visible presence to staff and parents. They have a clear focus on developing and strengthening continuity and consistency across both schools in the foundation.
- 5.4 The governors' systematic approach to policy review and implementation ensures that the school complies with all statutory requirements. Safeguarding arrangements are assiduously overseen, and the well-being of pupils is paramount at all times. The whole board reviews safeguarding arrangements annually.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 In the EYFS, leadership and management are highly effective in self-evaluation, setting ambitious targets and clear priorities for development, and ensuring that these are achieved. Highly effective partnerships have been established with parents and external agencies, so that children can access appropriate help to support their needs. Staff professional supervision procedures ensure that adults have the opportunities to raise concerns, consider their training needs and discuss individual children. The safeguarding of all children is conscientiously promoted, as are equality and diversity. In response to previous inspection recommendations, the roles and responsibilities of staff have been redefined; there is a coherent vision for staff development and for the improvement of the curriculum and resources. There have also been improvements to the learning environment and it is now stimulating outside as well as indoors.
- 5.7 Leaders and managers at all levels are highly successful in meeting the aims of the school, and in ensuring exceptional achievement and excellent provision for pupils. Since the previous inspection, leaders have tackled the issues identified with great thoroughness. The school's management structure has been reshaped to enable subject leaders to carry out their jobs fully and consistently, and roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined. Those staff with academic leadership



responsibilities carry out annual reviews of the curriculum to ensure that planning fully meets the needs, interests and aptitudes of the pupils. Subject leaders liaise with their counterparts in the senior school, where appropriate, to ensure continuity and progression for pupils who transfer. Additional pastoral management roles have been created through the posts of section leaders, who provide support and guidance to form teachers in their phase of the school.

- 5.8 Leadership and management give the school excellent direction through the carefully constructed school development plan, which focuses on appropriate priorities and involves all staff and governors. Management structures work very effectively. Systematic processes for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been strengthened in order to promote consistency across the school. Tracking of pupils' progress has been intensified in order to identify more quickly the appropriate pathways for pupils to take as they move toward senior school transfer. School self-evaluation is thoughtful and considered, and highlights the school's strengths and areas for development accurately. Staff feel involved and motivated, and there is a strong spirit of teamwork and loyalty. They share a common sense of purpose in promoting the best possible provision and outcomes for pupils. Leaders ensure a respect for others and the democratic process through their own personal example.
- 5.9 Leaders have also been successful in maintaining the high standards and quality identified at the previous inspection. They fully discharge their responsibilities for implementing the school's policies and ensuring that the safeguarding of pupils is a priority.
- 5.10 The school has recruited many high quality and experienced staff. Recruitment processes are efficient, and job descriptions are clear and comprehensive. The appraisal system is well established, links to the school development plan and enables staff to have an input into their continuing professional development. They have excellent opportunities to further their own education and careers. The school also ensures that staff receive the necessary training to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly in safeguarding, first aid, and other aspects of pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- 5.11 Parents of EYFS children develop strong links with the staff and have frequent contact with them at both the start and the end of the day. Since the previous inspection, reporting arrangements have improved. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's learning and achievements through the use of homework books, parents' evenings and written reports produced each term. A written summary reporting each child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and assessment scales is sent home before the end of the Reception year. Parents are also provided with an opportunity to discuss the contents of their children's EYFS Profile with their teacher. Appropriate intervention programmes are provided for all those who need additional individual support, and these are carefully monitored by the child's key person.
- 5.12 Strong partnerships with parents are evident throughout the school. The parents of new pupils are provided with a wide range of excellent information about the school through the prospectus, parents' handbooks, open days and induction events. A good range of useful information, including regulatory policies and details of the curriculum and timetables, is available to parents of both current and prospective pupils through the website. Weekly newsletters are sent by email to parents, with much information provided about sporting and musical occasions, plays,

competitions, exhibitions, celebrations, individual achievements and future events. The termly magazine provides an attractive and interesting summary of selected highlights.

- 5.13 The school maintains constructive and open relationships with parents and is proactive about seeking their views. The leadership team is responsive to the feedback offered and its members provide a visible presence, welcoming the pupils and their parents into school at the start of each day. This 'open door' policy provides parents with numerous opportunities to speak informally to the leadership team or to their children's form teachers. The school also provides parents with staff email addresses to facilitate communication. In discussions, parents spoke about how well the teachers know their children, and how much they appreciate the individual care, encouragement and support that their children receive.
- 5.14 The written reports sent to parents about each pupil's progress and effort in lessons are extremely thorough and informative, and parents are given the opportunity to respond to these. Parents spoke most positively about this feedback, and they also appreciate the helpful comments that pupils are given about how to improve their learning and performance. In their replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the information they receive and the timely response to their queries. They feel strongly that their children are happy and safe at school. In discussions, they spoke very positively about how their children's homework diaries keep them well informed and provide a ready means of communication between home and school. They all felt that the school provides many opportunities for them to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children.
- 5.15 The active parents' association, with representatives from each year group, organises many social and fund-raising events, with support from the staff. This also provides opportunities for parents of EYFS children to become involved in the wider life of the school. Over the past year, there has been a bonfire party, the annual summer ball, a coffee morning in aid of a cancer charity and frequent sales of second-hand uniform. Parents were highly positive about these events and described the extremely happy, family atmosphere that prevails at the school.

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