



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BERKHAMSTED PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

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

Full Name of School	<b>Berkhamsted Preparatory School</b>
DfE Number	<b>919/6005</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>311056</b>
Address	<b>Berkhamsted Preparatory School Kings Road Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 3YP</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01442 358202</b>
Fax Number	<b>01442 358203</b>
Email Address	<b>prephead@berkhamstedschool.org</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Adrian Taylor</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Gavin Laws</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>431</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (211 boys; 220 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 70    5-11: 361</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Mary Hall</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>25 Sep 2012 to 28 Sep 2012</b>

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 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', 'satisfactory' 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 and a governors' representative, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr David Horn

Mrs Elaine Hooton

Mrs Sally Russell

Mr David Callender

Mrs Sara Robinson

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head of Pre Prep, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)

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(s) 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	12

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

- 1.1 Berkhamsted Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged between three and eleven, and is part of the Berkhamsted Schools Group, a charitable company limited by guarantee. It was originally formed in 1998 following the merger of Berkhamsted Boys' Preparatory School and The Beeches Girls' Junior School. The school aims to nurture pupils' enjoyment of learning, engendering a spirit of enquiry and intellectual independence, encouraging the pursuit of excellence within a disciplined and stimulating learning environment.
- 1.2 The preparatory and senior schools are overseen by an independent governing body and managed by the principal. The two schools share bursarial, human resource, marketing and estates management, as well as theatre and sports facilities. The headmaster, who was appointed in 1998, is a member of the school executive. The purpose-built accommodation is situated opposite the girls' section of the senior school, to the south of the town. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes, known as Stepping Stones, are housed separately with their own play area and access. Since the previous inspection the preparatory school senior development team has been restructured to include two deputy heads overseeing the work of pupils in Years 3 and 4, and in Years 5 and 6 respectively. In addition, new clubs have been formed for the most able pupils and national tests have been replaced by commercially produced standardised tests.
- 1.3 There are a total of 431 pupils on roll, with 211 boys and 220 girls. The EYFS has 70 children, 65 of them attending the school part-time. Sixty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are three pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils come from professional and business families in the locality, with some travelling from villages and towns further afield.
- 1.4 Whilst there is a broad spread of abilities in the school, its ability profile is above the national average. Entry to the school is by assessment and report for pupils aged seven and under, and by formal examination in literacy and numeracy from Year 3. Transfer to the senior school is through the school's own entrance examination in mathematics, English and verbal reasoning. Whilst the majority of pupils move on to the senior school, a small number transfer to local maintained grammar schools or other independent schools.
- 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 successful in meeting its aims and offers a high quality educational experience to its pupils. Throughout the school, the pupils' achievement is excellent because of their highly positive attitude to learning; they reach high standards both in their academic work and through a varied array of well-organised extra-curricular activities. The curriculum has appropriate diversity and balance; the previous inspection's recommendation to extend the provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been successfully addressed. Good teaching was observed throughout the school, although in a small proportion of lessons the specific needs of pupils were overlooked, and the quality of some subject schemes of work was inconsistent. Pupils make rapid progress in relation to their abilities and are successful beyond the classroom, with significant achievements in sport, music and drama. Knowledgeable teaching supports individuals and encourages effective learning. The quality of the provision in the EYFS is outstanding, and teachers and assistants have a broad understanding of how the young children in their care learn.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent across all age groups. It is exemplified in the pupils' high levels of interpersonal skills, confidence and self-esteem. These often show maturity beyond their years in their relations with each other and their teachers; high standards of behaviour around the school are the norm. Pupils feel happy, secure and well cared for due to the school's exemplary pastoral care. Arrangements for health and safety are excellent. Safeguarding the welfare of the pupils is of utmost concern to all staff. All necessary procedures and policies are now in place, and staff are trained appropriately.
- 2.3 The governors provide excellent oversight of the school; they discharge their statutory duties diligently, and have a clear vision for the school's future development. They are aware of their responsibility for regulatory matters and have been careful in ensuring that recruitment checks for themselves and volunteers have been correctly carried out. The quality of leadership and management at all levels is good and highly committed, especially with regard to the personal development of pupils, which continues to be a strength of the school. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed further since the previous inspection. However, although time is allocated to subject co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to support the development of good practice, this is taking place inconsistently throughout the school. Links with parents are excellent. In their pre-inspection questionnaire, they were appreciative of the pastoral support and guidance shown to their children and felt that standards of behaviour are high. A few parents expressed some concerns that bullying in school was not handled well. The inspection team did not find evidence to support this view.

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

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

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

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

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

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that all subject co-ordinators monitor the quality of teaching consistently in their subjects and share identified good practice.
  2. Ensure that classroom teaching in all subjects makes provision for appropriate challenge for all pupils.
  3. Ensure that the appraisal of staff throughout the school, including the EYFS, is sufficiently systematic and evenly applied.



### **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' achievement is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. Across the curriculum and in all age groups, pupils attain high standards, with some individual examples of excellence. Pupils display very strong factual knowledge, and are able to apply their skills in creative and practical subjects and show excellent understanding across the curriculum as a whole. At all levels, pupils achieve excellent standards in their numeracy skills. Older pupils demonstrate good levels of logical and independent thought when given the opportunity to use a range of strategies to investigate and solve problems, for example in design technology (DT). In the EYFS, children speak with confidence and clarity. They talk about items brought from home and can say the phonic sound with which their item begins. Older pupils are able to express themselves fluently both in their speaking and in their written work. They are articulate and many demonstrate a wide and varied vocabulary for their age, which includes the correct application of technical terms. Pupils read with clarity and appreciate a broad range of literature. Their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are applied effectively to a range of subjects and for some individual research. The pupils listen carefully to instructions as well as the ideas and views expressed by their peers. Throughout the school, high standards are attained in the creative and performing arts, and some imaginative examples of artwork are exhibited in classrooms. The skill levels of pupils in physical education (PE) and games are high. Boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school. By the end of the EYFS, nearly all children achieve or exceed the expected goals, responding well to the high expectations of staff; the overall quality and standards are excellent and children make at least good, and on occasion excellent, progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Pupils receiving support for SEND develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts and the achievement of the most able pupils is particularly high in their understanding of number and written tasks.
- 3.3 Notable successes have been achieved in fixtures and competitions at a local, regional and national level across a range of sports, most notably in netball, skiing and swimming. Many pupils achieve very well in external examinations in music, speech and drama. Pupils are successful in entry examinations to the senior school and, in addition to academic scholarships, gain awards in art, music, drama and sport. Other notable successes have recently included the Years 5 and 6 'Countdown' teams both winning and taking the runners up positions in their respective regional competitions. Individual success was achieved at the highest level in the UK Maths Challenge and at second place in national ski championships where the school ski team also performed with distinction.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. These high levels of achievement are reflected in the results of standardised tests. Inspection judgements, including observed performance in books, lessons and curriculum interviews, confirm this estimation of the pupils' attainment. This indicates that pupils sustain a good rate of progress in relation to those of similar ability. Pupils with SEND make good progress because of the excellent support they receive. Gifted and talented pupils develop high levels of skill through setting in mathematics that focuses teaching on their particular

academic requirements. Those with EAL cultivate good listening and speaking skills.

- 3.5 The pupils' success owes much to their positive attitudes and their confident approach to school, learning with evident enjoyment and enthusiasm. They are keen to succeed and be actively involved in lessons, and are able to work constructively on their own or in groups. The mutual respect and excellent relationships amongst themselves and with teachers and other staff prepare pupils well for attaining success. Pupils are attentive and express their ideas with thought and consideration for others.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.7 Throughout, the academic curriculum supports the aims of the school and successfully covers the required areas of learning. In meeting the needs of all children who attend the EYFS, the curriculum provision is good. Clearly structured programmes for language and communication, and social, emotional and physical education ensure that children have key skills needed for the next steps in their learning. For older pupils, thorough short-term planning includes highlighted cross-curricular opportunities for ICT and PSHE, and in the best examples, detailed extension activities for more able pupils. The curriculum is further broadened throughout the school by the inclusion of ICT, DT, PSHE and religious education (RE), which are incorporated into the EYFS curriculum and taught as discrete subjects from Year 1, along with French.
- 3.8 The curriculum is appropriate to the age and needs of all pupils. The school shows flexibility in planning for pupils with particular needs and setting is used in mathematics to meet the requirements of individual pupils; those with SEND or EAL are well supported through individual lessons and with the careful deployment of additional staff, where appropriate. Helpful guidance and clearly set out assessment information are given to subject teachers regarding pupils with SEND or EAL and those who are more able. Some additional opportunities are provided in lessons for extension work, although such provision for the most able is not fully developed in all areas of the curriculum. The teaching of French in Years 3 to 6 has been enhanced significantly since the previous inspection by the use of a specialist teacher. Pupils benefit from a PE and games programme which provides excellent opportunities and specialist teaching in a wide range of sports, utilising the excellent shared facilities. Recently, lacrosse has been introduced to the sporting programme for girls.
- 3.9 The academic curriculum is supported by an extensive extra-curricular programme that has been further extended since the previous inspection. Pupils can choose from an excellent range of creative and general interest activities in addition to sports, including the very popular Saturday Sports Club. Activities include art, drama and sewing, enhancing pupils' creative skills, German, to aid understanding of another European language and culture, and work towards speaking and performing examinations where pupils achieve excellent results. A wide range of individual music lessons takes place, with pupils working very successfully towards external music examinations. Musical talent is further developed through choirs and musical groups such as the brass ensemble and the orchestra. Two new clubs for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and in Years 5 and 6 provide extension activities for identified more able pupils. Chess is now introduced to pupils in Years 3 and 4, and a drama club is greatly enjoyed. Pupils' education is further broadened through a

range of residential and other visits, including a Year 2 trip to a local open air museum to support their work on houses and homes. Day visits are used appropriately to support pupils' learning, for example a Year 5 history outing to Hampton Court Palace.

- 3.10 Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of their community by initiating fund-raising activities of their own devising. Good causes supported have included leukaemia research and a local hospice as well as other charities identified by pupils. Pupils become more culturally aware through the developing link with a junior school in South Africa. Groups in the local community, such as choirs, are able to hire the school hall.

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

- 3.11 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.12 Overall, teaching enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of all subjects and allows them to make good progress according to their abilities, increase their knowledge and develop their skills. The best lessons are taught at a good pace and pupils are inspired to make the most of the time available to maximise their progress. This was exemplified in a lively and stimulating Year 6 poetry lesson where pupils collaborated effectively to produce imaginative and innovative poems of a high quality. Teaching is supported by excellent resources that are used effectively by teachers. The teaching of PSHE as a separate subject has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This was exemplified by a Year 5 assembly where pupils demonstrated a good appreciation of the daily lives of children living in Afghanistan. Lessons include a good range of teaching strategies that stimulate pupils. Interactive whiteboards and the ICT suite engage the pupils' imagination when used creatively. Pupils are challenged to take responsibility for their learning, allowing them the opportunity to work co-operatively, making discoveries for themselves. The use of specialist teachers in ICT, DT, French and PE is beneficial to pupils' learning, engenders high expectations and contributes significantly to pupils' progress in these subjects.
- 3.13 The quality of subject schemes of work is uneven; the most effective have clearly defined aims and objectives, and are linked to a distinct list of topics to be covered. Teachers' planning and preparation of lessons are cohesive and link well to lesson objectives, and cover a good range of activities. Plans include clear indications of those pupils who require additional support and those who are working at a higher level, though in less successful lessons where this ability range was not taken into account fully, all pupils started and concluded with the same activity. Teachers show an excellent depth of knowledge and understanding of their subjects and impart a genuine sense of enjoyment through their teaching. Teaching is supported by a range of on-going assessments that includes the use of nationally recognised tests. Data indicating the progress of all pupils is stored electronically and staff make good use of this to direct their own teaching and preparation. However, this is not used consistently by all staff to record and plan for the next steps in the pupils' development. Worksheets are frequently used appropriately to support pupils' learning, though in the less successful lessons observed these were employed without any clear purpose.
- 3.14 The learning support staff are well qualified and have an excellent understanding of how to employ assessment data to identify pupils' needs. Pupils are identified quickly, supported, tracked and reviewed regularly with the co-operation and support

of parents. Parents are informed and are very supportive of this work. The very few pupils with EAL are supported by a specialist teacher. The marking policy is broadly followed and teacher comments are invariably positive and encouraging. In a proportion of lessons there was little evidence of clear target setting. Teachers know the pupils well. Praise and encouragement are given consistently and the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils' behaviour in lessons is always exemplary.

- 3.15 In the EYFS, through careful questioning, the children are given many opportunities to express themselves clearly and with confidence. They are encouraged to use language for a variety of reasons, for example to describe mathematical shapes or to discuss how the bark of a tree feels. A good variety of planned indoor and outdoor activities gives children some exciting experiences across the seven areas of learning. However, there are occasions when children in the EYFS do not have sufficient opportunities for independent learning and problem solving. Assessments of children's progress are regularly collated and clearly recorded. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and are well supported.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in instilling its values of placing pupils at the heart of a strong, supportive community, nurturing pupils' enjoyment of learning and fostering moral and spiritual values through its Christian tradition. Pupils are happy, polite, helpful and well behaved. The children in the EYFS are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They arrive happily at school, feel safe and are confident to share concerns with any member of staff.
- 4.3 Developments since the previous inspection have included the embedding of PSHE across the curriculum, the training of teachers and support staff in aspects of pastoral care, and the appointment of a school counsellor to work across the senior and preparatory schools. As a consequence, throughout the school, including the EYFS, pupils show a high degree of social awareness. In interviews and around the school, they are confident and can articulate their thoughts and feelings in a mature manner. They are self-aware and often able to reflect on their learning and behaviour, identifying strengths and weaknesses, such as those in Year 3 who identified a need to become better at telling the time. Playtime is greatly enjoyed and pupils demonstrate sociable, caring and friendly attitudes toward each other across and between the year groups.
- 4.4 Pupils learn practices and principles of Christian worship through assemblies that, increasingly, they lead themselves, and RE lessons. They are able to share in reflective prayer and understand the significance of how they play their own part in the school community. Through role play, story and prayer the pupils consider how to choose wisely and whom to follow. Other world faiths are discussed in RE lessons and pupils make thoughtful responses to these that are shared in classroom displays, such as those on Sikhism in Year 4.
- 4.5 The moral development of the pupils is very secure. They have a well-defined sense of right and wrong, and understand the reasons for the rules that guide their behaviour. In some classes pupils have drawn up their own rules. Pupils are generally aware that they are responsible for their own actions and show a consistent appreciation of how these can affect others. They have a strong sense of fairness and demonstrate concern to correct perceived injustice. As they move around the school they are unfailingly helpful and polite toward each other, their teachers and visitors.
- 4.6 Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities within the school. There is a commitment to help those less fortunate than themselves through the variety of charity fund-raising undertaken. Pupils regularly put forward fund-raising ideas, showing great initiative and a genuine desire to help others. The link that the school has with another school in South Africa also creates great curiosity and prompts charitable events. This cultural appreciation is broadened further through studies of other religions, listening to the music of other cultures and geographical studies, for example enjoying Jamaican rap rhythms or comparing life in the UK and Bangladesh. Teachers are able to develop the views of pupils, who cultivate a deeper understanding of ethnic diversity. Pupils are knowledgeable about public institutions and services in the UK and those in Year 3 knew that the origins of modern democracy derive from Ancient Greece.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 This provision reflects the school's aim to place pupils at the heart of a strong, supportive school community. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. Pupils say that staff care for them very well, and they know who to turn to if they need help. Time is taken to resolve any concerns and teachers regularly praise and encourage pupils. The rewards and sanctions system motivates pupils to behave well and do their best at all times. The recently introduced report cards allow staff to monitor behaviour and involve parents when necessary. Playground behaviour is closely supervised and staff encourage good relationships amongst pupils.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, key people form strong bonds with the children and promote high standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect for one another. Children are taught to develop a good awareness of personal safety and observe the simple rules that relate to this. They are helped to develop self-help skills and good hygiene practices from an early age. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. All children, including the youngest, are polite and show respect to one another. They listen carefully to adult guidance, taking turns and sharing toys and equipment sensibly. They display high levels of confidence, curiosity and concentration, and when given the opportunity show good independence skills.
- 4.10 The school readily seeks the views of pupils, both informally and through the 'Children's Forum,' with pupil representatives from each class from Years 3 to 6. Children from Years 1 and 2 have expressed an interest in also being included.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles throughout the school, including in the EYFS. The Year 5 science curriculum helps pupils to learn about a healthy body and a healthy diet. Opportunities are provided for them to enjoy exercise, both in PE and in some extra-curricular activities. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. The meals served at school are nutritious, locally sourced and closely monitored for their quality. Individual dietary needs are provided for.
- 4.12 Bullying is not tolerated in the school. Policy and practice are clear about this and pupils reported in interviews that it does not occur. They clearly feel this is a happy school where everybody gets on well. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.13 The provision made for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.14 The safeguarding policy is comprehensive; it reflects accurately current practice as well as official guidance, and is reviewed annually by senior managers and all governors. Staff and governors, including those with special responsibilities as designated senior persons, have received all necessary relevant child protection training and induction. Good relationships are maintained with local welfare agencies. Safe recruitment procedures are now meticulously followed on all new staff appointments. The centralised register for the appointment of staff, governors and volunteers, which had previously been incomplete, is now accurately maintained. The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and archived.
- 4.15 Very effective measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. The thorough fire policy and prudently constructed fire risk assessments, in conjunction with regular fire practices carried out in all parts of the school, are in place to ensure the safety of the pupils, staff and visitors.
- 4.16 Records and documentation of all aspects of health and safety are meticulously kept. Expedient generic and specific risk assessments are now in place, covering all areas of the school. School trips and visits are very carefully planned and measures taken to minimise risks.
- 4.17 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils of all ages are excellent and nursing staff provide exemplary care. Staff are very well informed about individual needs and conditions, including any pupils with SEND. The excellent facilities for medical care and the accessibility of trained staff in the medical centre allow pupils to be very well looked after. First-aid training is arranged for all staff at a basic level and at a higher level for staff with specific responsibilities. Any medical incidents are recorded appropriately. The pupils' welfare is a priority and the well-qualified staff maintain a secure environment with rigorous supervision.

## **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 very effectively contributes to the implementation of the aim to place pupils at the heart of a strong, supportive school community. Governors are committed to the appointment of well-qualified teachers and managers to maintain and enhance the quality of the pupils' education. An effective system of six committees for areas such as education, finance and property allows careful consideration of school business and gives the governing body an informed understanding of its responsibilities. Governors with backgrounds in education, law, business and finance bring a broad range of experience and expertise to the board. There is an excellent induction procedure for new governors and a very good range of opportunities for training to support them in their responsibilities. These have included seminars and training days on child protection and health and safety. In consultation with the senior development team, governors have drawn up a well-informed and realistic preparatory school development plan.
- 5.3 The designation of an individual governor with particular responsibility for the preparatory school ensures effective insight into its organisation and day-to-day management, assisting with the school's on-going self-evaluation of its effectiveness. The governors are kept well informed by informal contact with senior staff as well as through termly formal reports, subject presentations and regular visits to the school. Minutes from a selection of sub-committee meetings indicate that governors have a good awareness of educational standards. The governors provide effective oversight of the preparatory school and EYFS, including financial planning and investment in staff, the provision of high quality school premises and excellent resources to enhance pupils' learning.
- 5.4 The governors take seriously their responsibility for welfare, health and safety, and are committed to improving still further the effectiveness of their monitoring. The safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and has been modified in line with current legislation.



## **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, is good.
- 5.6 Leadership and management are successful in promoting the aims of the school, and their success is mirrored in the pupils' achievements across a broad range of curricular and extra-curricular provision. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. In particular, the pupils' excellent personal development is a direct consequence of the exceptional quality of pastoral care and safeguarding afforded to them all. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed further since the previous inspection. Policies and schemes are reviewed periodically; these are distributed to teachers and are implemented across the school effectively. However, the quality of these is uneven in style and content. Although time is allocated to subject co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and to support the development of good practice, this is taking place inconsistently throughout the school. The supervision of the curriculum is generally well managed and regular reviews of pupils' work are beginning to be undertaken in order to provide some cohesion across different year groups.
- 5.7 The senior development team meets each week to review and reflect on the school's particular strengths and those areas in need of improvement, and has constructed a comprehensive development plan, which includes details of educational priorities for the future. The current plan is thorough and well formulated, and takes into account the views of senior staff. It is currently in the process of being modified to include time frames, objectives, cost implications and resource requirements. Self-evaluation in the EYFS shows a good understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses, and sets clear direction for future developments.
- 5.8 Staff appraisal successfully identifies areas for teacher development and includes lesson observation and the setting of targets. Though the present appraisal process provides sufficient rigour, its implementation lacks adequate consistency and regularity. The headmaster currently appraises nearly all the preparatory school staff, though other senior members of staff are currently being trained to take on some of this responsibility and the procedure is under review. Although there is a programme for professional development for staff in the EYFS, the frequency of meetings, observations and target setting is inconsistent. Members of staff attend courses when appropriate to support their subject knowledge and professional development. Key aspects are then subsequently fed back to colleagues. In addition, whole-staff training is provided, for example a recent day on child protection. The senior development team is supportive of formal requests as well as being responsive to new ideas and informal suggestions.
- 5.9 The recruitment of staff is well managed. The procedures for checking staff prior to their appointment are secure. A well-managed induction process ensures that all staff are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, health and safety. The school has been effective in securing and supporting well-qualified staff who are committed and hard working, and who make a significant impact on pupils' achievements and welfare. Teaching assistants provide appropriate support, working closely and effectively with class teachers and in the wider school community. Communication between the school sites is generally efficient. The transition of pupils from the EYFS to Year 1 and between the preparatory school and the senior school is meticulously organised and effectively aids the preparation of pupils for the next stage of their education.

- 5.10 The school grounds, though limited in size at present for some younger pupils, are a particularly well-managed asset, ensuring a safe and varied setting in which the pupils can enjoy their experience, within a family atmosphere, shaped and upheld by a dedicated team of management, teaching and non-teaching staff.
- 5.11 The school maintains excellent relationships with parents. They are very supportive of the school and appreciate the wide range of helpful information provided through email, the website and well-used home/school links books, as well as comprehensive newsletters from the headmaster two or three times a term. The welcome pack and family handbook for parents of new and prospective pupils, in addition to year group curriculum plans, are wide ranging and helpful.
- 5.12 The parents' views as expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire were generally positive about the school and the progress their children make. In particular they commended the pastoral support and guidance shown to their children and the way in which they are looked after. They feel that standards of behaviour are high and that the school is well led. Almost all parents would recommend the school to other parents. A few parents expressed some concerns that bullying in school had not been handled effectively. The inspection team found no evidence from conversations and interviews with pupils, parents and staff to support this view.
- 5.13 Reports are sent to parents once a year in the EYFS and twice a year from Year 1. They are comprehensive and many include specific guidance for further improvement and success. In addition, 'sharing days', for parents to see pupils' work undertaken at school, provide parents with further insight into the progress of their children and enable them to follow their learning. In addition, parents evenings take place for each year group throughout the school twice a year and provide parents with the opportunity to engage with staff and discuss progress. In the EYFS, staff work closely with parents and carers, keeping them well informed about proposed topics and sharing information about daily activities through a home-school diary. Parents are invited to contribute to their children's record of achievement. They greatly enjoy their weekly visit to the setting to sit with their children and share their work and achievements.
- 5.14 An active whole-school parents' association supports the school through a wide variety of fund-raising and social events. These include a Michaelmas fair, quiz evening and summer ball. Parents feel that they are welcomed into the school and are able to enjoy some of the many informal opportunities to meet with staff, for example at Saturday Sports. Parents are invited to attend larger scale events such as the carol service and prize giving, and many attend school concerts and drama performances, as well as the many sporting events.
- 5.15 The school has an appropriate and effective procedure to deal with complaints; parents with a concern or query regarding their children are able to contact the school at any time. Concerns are handled in a manner consistent with the procedure.

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