



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

SUTTON VALENCE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Sutton Valence Preparatory School

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

Full Name of School **Sutton Valence Preparatory School**

DfE Number **886/6019**

Registered Charity Number **309267**

Address **Sutton Valence Preparatory School
Church Road
Chart Sutton
Maidstone
Kent
ME17 3RF**

Telephone Number **01622 842117**

Fax Number **01622 844201**

Email Address **enquiries@svprep.svs.org.uk**

Headmaster **Mr Malcolm Gough**

Chair of Governors **Mr Bryan Baughan**

Age Range **3 to 11**

Total Number of Pupils **296**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (166 boys; 130 girls)**

Numbers by Age 3-5 (EYFS): **46**

5-11: **250**

Head of EYFS Setting **Miss Phillipa McCarmick**

EYFS Gender **Mixed**

Inspection Dates **26 Nov 2013 to 29 Nov 2013**

PREFACE

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

Mr Jonathan Brough

Mr Nick Folland

Mrs Sandra Kiddle

Mrs Sue Rix

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sutton Valence Preparatory School is a mixed day school, located on a large rural site near Maidstone in Kent. The school first opened as Underhill School in 1954. In 1980 it became associated with the United Westminster Schools Trust, which had already administered the senior school, Sutton Valence School, since 1910. The two schools amalgamated in 1995, and the preparatory school was given its current name in 2001. The senior and preparatory schools are on two sites separated by half a mile. Each has its own head and the head of the preparatory school reports to the head of the senior school and the shared governing body.
- 1.2 The school's aims are to provide: a caring, supportive and inclusive community; a challenging, relevant and broad curriculum, implemented in ways that allow all to achieve; a comprehensive range of sporting, artistic, cultural and social activities, and opportunities for pupils to develop self-discipline, leadership and teamwork; a safe, secure and stimulating environment that promotes excellence, independence, and high standards whilst providing support for all; and a grounding in moral and spiritual understanding which promotes respect for others, along with self-respect.
- 1.3 The school educates girls and boys aged from three to eleven years, offering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. Since the previous inspection, a new headmaster of the preparatory school has taken up post with effect from September 2012, and the position of head of pre-prep has been created. The pre-prep has its own building on the site, housing pupils from Nursery to Year 2.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 296 pupils on roll, of whom 46 were in the EYFS. The main point of entry to the school is in the Nursery. The school does not select by academic ability. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most pupils having at least above average ability. The spread of abilities is fairly wide, with a small number of pupils being of below average ability.
- 1.5 Two pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), of whom one receives language support. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, including a few from minority ethnic families. Forty-four pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), many of whom are dyslexic, and thirty-eight receive learning support from the school. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Reception to Year 6 and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The school refers to the Nursery as Kindergarten.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Sutton Valence Preparatory School is extremely successful in meeting its aims of providing a caring, supportive and inclusive community where pupils enjoy a challenging, relevant and broad curriculum that allows all to achieve. Pupils' achievement throughout the school from the EYFS onwards is excellent and they attain high standards, gaining a secure grounding in literacy and numeracy. They make progress that is good and frequently excellent, particularly those with SEND. The school has identified as an area for development improved provision to ensure that the most able, gifted and talented pupils are able to fulfil their potential. Pupils benefit from excellent, dynamic teaching by staff who are innovative in their approach, and from a fresh and exciting curriculum where excellent links are made between subjects. As a result, pupils are motivated and independent learners who can use their initiative and who make the most of the very wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are highly considerate towards others and supportive of them, able to reflect on their own experiences, and with a keen sense of right and wrong. They show appreciation of other cultures. Pupils are very happy at school. They feel well known and valued due to the strong relationships they have with staff, and the excellent quality of the pastoral care provided. Policies, procedures and routines are very well organised. Excellent attention is given to pupils' welfare, health and safety throughout the school.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. Governors use their considerable experience and expertise to support and challenge the school effectively, and invest prudently to ensure that staff, accommodation and resources are deployed to provide a high quality of education for the pupils. They ensure that the school fully complies with all legal requirements and that pupils are effectively safeguarded. Senior leaders have united the school with a common purpose, disseminated to other staff and inspiring them to help move the school forward. The preparatory school works closely and co-operatively with the senior school. Systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school have been established, though some subject leaders do not have sufficient time out of class to play a full part in this. Good new assessment systems have been introduced into the EYFS, but are not consistently implemented across all the classes. Parents are highly pleased with the school and what it offers their children. They feel very well informed and involved in school life and in their children's learning.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Increase opportunities for able, gifted and talented pupils by using the expertise and facilities of the senior school.
2. Ensure that sufficient time is made available for subject leaders to carry out their management responsibilities for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing their subjects.
3. Incorporate the recently reviewed EYFS assessment systems across all classes in the setting.

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 excellent.
- 3.2 The school is very successful in meeting its aim of ensuring that pupils have a rich all-round education underpinned by secure skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils of all ages are articulate and express their ideas with thought and care. They listen attentively in lessons, both to their teachers and to their classmates. Pupils read with understanding and are able to talk perceptively about what they have read. They write accurately and at length for a range of purposes, and know how to use language creatively. They relish the many opportunities they have to be creative and work independently, and to apply their skills across the curriculum. Pupils write creatively in history and geography, and use their mathematical skills in science, for example when expressing the results of their experiments in graphs. They have extremely well-developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and use these in many different contexts, such as research, word processing and artwork. Pupils enjoy being physically active and participate with great enthusiasm and competence in physical education (PE) lessons, competitive sport and extra-curricular games. They achieve highly in sport, and also in music; many participate to a high standard in the school's choirs and orchestra.
- 3.3 Children in the EYFS, including those with SEND, make excellent progress in relationship to their starting points. A careful baseline assessment is carried out when children join the school and regular assessments facilitate planning the next steps in learning and development. Consequently, after less than a term at school, children in the Nursery class can form letters and write their names. They are able to recognise and name shapes, recognise numbers and count at least to 10. In the Reception classes, children can count at least to 20, perform simple addition, write short sentences and use a clear cursive style when forming letters. In both the Nursery class and Reception they sing songs enthusiastically and remember words for their Christmas plays. Children develop excellent fine motor skills, as shown when manipulating and sticking small items for a collage. They develop confident skills at the computer so that they can independently access simple games and drawing programmes.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be excellent, based on the work seen in lessons and in their books. They achieve considerable success in local authority Eleven Plus examinations. They are also very successful at gaining scholarships and exhibitions to the senior school and other competitive local schools for academic work, art, sport, music, choral performance and drama. Pupils' progress from their different starting points is good as they move through the school. Those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported, in their withdrawal sessions and in class, in all subjects across the curriculum.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Boys and girls alike are equally motivated self-starters who show excellent powers of concentration and application. They are happy to organise themselves in groups and co-operate with one another to produce work of high quality. Pupils are consistently keen to use their initiative and participate fully in lessons. They take pride in their work, presenting it neatly and completing corrections when asked. They are able to

assess their own learning and that of others sensibly and positively when required to do so.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The children's needs are met exceptionally well in the EYFS. Throughout the setting the areas relating to communication and language and to physical and personal development are given high priority, and so the children are provided with a sound foundation on which to build their future learning. As they progress, provision for literacy, mathematics, creativity and understanding of the world is excellent. Staff plan notably stimulating and challenging activities and experiences across the areas of the EYFS curriculum. A carefully judged balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning enables children to explore, investigate and be creative.
- 3.8 The recently adopted independent curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is broadly based. It supplements through a range of stimulating activities that are predominantly topic based, evident, for example, in displays, lessons and reports in the *Young Suttonian* publication. The curriculum more broadly contributes significantly to the excellent standards that the pupils achieve, including outstanding success in the national Young Journalist of the Year award. The school's curriculum enables it to be successful in its aim of providing a challenging, relevant and broad curriculum in ways that allow all to achieve. These strategic improvements have allowed the school to build on the good educational experience that was found at the time of the previous inspection. Emphasis is placed on the quality of literacy and numeracy throughout all subjects, and presentation of the work set is of a consistently high standard.
- 3.9 The excellent resourcing of ICT and a well-organised and resourced library contribute to curricular provision by extending opportunities for flexible independent research. The facilities for science are good, and pupils enjoy a practical approach to scientific experiments. Pupils also benefit from an early introduction to a modern foreign language.
- 3.10 The curriculum is tailored to the needs of all age groups and abilities. Across the curriculum, pupils with individual needs receive excellent support from the learning support team through early intervention, in-class help and the provision of comprehensive learning support plans. The most able are provided with challenging activities that promote independent learning, and a programme of thinking skills and philosophy for children has been introduced. The school has identified extension of provision for able, gifted and talented pupils as an area for further development. Targets to enhance progress are identified by pupils and staff. Pupils report that they gain immense enjoyment from the subjects they study and value the opportunities that are provided.
- 3.11 Opportunities are available for pupils to excel in the many areas of the curriculum, especially in music and sport, and successes are widely celebrated, for example through awards at the weekly celebration assembly and in the *Young Suttonian*, and through high quality productions such as *Oliver* by Year 6 and *Treasure Island* by Years 3 and 4. The curriculum is supported by a diverse range of extra-curricular activities, including artistic roller skating, cake decorating, karate and ballroom dancing. A range of visits, such as the Year 2 train trip to London, the Year 5 excursion to France and the Year 6 residential trip focusing on bush craft, plays a

significant role in widening the pupils' experiences and developing their independence and leadership skills. The curriculum is further enhanced by a number of workshops run by visitors, such as on Aztec culture and the Vikings.

- 3.12 The school enjoys strong links with the community. A group of pupils from the school created an Easter garden for Westminster Abbey. The school hosts events for local primary schools, such as the recent cross-country Orchard Run. Local businesses support the school, for example through contributions of firewood for Bonfire Night. Good use is made of the local church as a venue for pupils' performances. An overwhelming majority of parents indicated in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they are happy with the curricular and extra-curricular provision.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 Teaching is extremely effective in enabling pupils to make excellent progress and is highly successful in supporting the aims of the school. A significant factor in the improvement in teaching is the clear structure for the monitoring of marking and assessment, introduced since the previous inspection.
- 3.15 In the EYFS, staff know the children very well and as a result devise highly appropriate activities for their interests and needs. This is demonstrated by the children's enthusiastic use of the excellent range of resources in the outdoor area, where the development of co-ordination skills and an understanding of risk are effectively promoted. Regular and perceptive assessments of the children's progress are used to plan the next steps in each child's learning. Staff have devoted a great amount of thought and time in producing new assessment systems that are manageable and effective. However, this process is not yet completed.
- 3.16 Staff in the EYFS are adept at identifying any children who may have some learning needs or delay. They implement effective support strategies, which are regularly monitored and shared with parents. As a result, these children achieve very well according to their starting points. More able children are also consistently challenged by more demanding tasks and by an enriched curriculum that includes specialist teaching in French, PE and dance. However, at times, timetabling of specialist teaching is not conducive to the continuity and flow of the school day for younger children.
- 3.17 In Years 1 to 6, pupils benefit from the enthusiasm, commitment and secure subject knowledge of their teachers, together with effective management of time and resources. Innovative and creative approaches to the curriculum foster the pupils' interest at all levels and enhance their learning, for example the *Narnia* displays in Year 1 classrooms. The best teaching develops knowledge and skills, through a wide variety of activities that are carefully tailored to individual needs and allow the pupils to achieve at a high level. Extension activities, such as those in science, encourage pupils to become increasingly independent.
- 3.18 Teachers know their pupils well and demonstrate understanding of their needs, both in tutor time and in lessons such as in personal, social and health education (PSHE). The strong relationships between staff and pupils, based on mutual respect and trust, result in a positive and purposeful atmosphere, as observed in lessons. Teachers are skilful in using strategies to capture pupils' attention on the rare occasions that they may lose concentration.

- 3.19 Information and communication technology is well integrated across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics and the humanities. Excellent use is made of interactive whiteboards, both to present information and for pupils to complete the tasks set for the class. The recent introduction of tablet computers has extended the opportunities that pupils have to undertake cross-curricular work.
- 3.20 Teachers are successful in creating a secure and stimulating environment, which promotes excellence, independence and high standards whilst providing support to all who need it. In classrooms and communal areas, high quality displays celebrate the pupils' work.
- 3.21 All marking is undertaken positively and comprehensively, and the majority provides targets for improvement. In the best examples, pupils respond to comments. Assessment information is used effectively for lesson planning, in most cases taking account of individual needs. In the best, opportunities are provided for self-assessment and peer assessment.
- 3.22 In the most successful teaching, planning takes very good account of individual needs, including those of pupils identified with SEND or who are able, gifted and talented. Occasionally, tasks are not as clearly matched to need or the pace is more sedentary, and so pupils do not progress as well.
- 3.23 The excellent provision for pupils with SEND results from a combination of thorough support by the learning support department through tracking, incorporation of learning support plans into lesson planning and clear communication, and effective teamwork with class teachers.

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 This is in accordance with the aims of the school. In the EYFS, excellent provision ensures that the children's personal, social and emotional development is of a high standard. They are friendly, courteous and sociable. They work constructively together and share equipment. They follow class routines sensibly. The children feel safe, valued and happy at their school. Preparation for pupils' transition within the school is highly effective.
- 4.3 Pupils across the school demonstrate confidence, self-awareness and courtesy in everything that they do. Their concern for the welfare of those around them, both those in the same year group and younger pupils, is consistently evident. They empathise well with others. They demonstrate self-reflection as happy, valued and satisfied members of a mutually supportive community. In everything they do, pupils exhibit considerable emotional maturity for their age; their personalities are well developed and their behaviour blends pride in achievements with an awareness of those around them.
- 4.4 Pupils manifest a developed sense of right and wrong and are keenly aware that they are responsible for the consequences of their actions. The pupils' exemplary conduct in all areas means that they are excellent ambassadors for their school.
- 4.5 Pupils' self-esteem is conspicuous and they delight in a myriad of performance opportunities, such as concerts, shows, celebration assemblies and class performances. Pupils enjoy accepting various responsibilities that help the school to run smoothly. Tasks and duties develop leadership skills in classes. Members of the school council speak with pride about the democratic process in operation, for example in how charities are selected and in fund-raising activities to benefit those less fortunate than themselves. The school supports a number of good causes, such as a county wildlife trust, a recent appeal for the Philippines and a Christmas gift appeal. Pupils aspire to the role of prefect, recognising it as a position to be earned and appreciating its value to the senior management of the school; they place clear significance on the prefects' input. Pupils also enjoy having responsibilities for the various animals housed at school.
- 4.6 Pupils understand and respect faiths and cultures, both their own and those of others. They recognise and celebrate similarities and differences, taking particular pleasure in demonstrating their understanding of various cultural groups and artefacts that are significant to them, such as Rangoli patterns as an element of the Hindu festival of Divali. Pupils also understand and respect aspects of Western cultural traditions, responding with enthusiasm to a study of Shakespearean drama and to the school's links with Westminster Abbey.
- 4.7 Pupils enjoy attending their school, as shown in their overwhelmingly positive responses to their questionnaire. They have an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school.

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, staff use praise and encouragement to promote the exemplary standards of courtesy and behaviour expected in the school and they give high priority to the children's happiness, health and safety. On a day-to-day basis, children are cared for extremely well in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. The younger children are sensitively guided to develop respect for one another, to share and co-operate so that they develop strong relationships with their teachers and with each other. Carefully designed class routines, consistently implemented, help the children develop confidence and independence. The 'superstars' assembly and lunch with senior leadership staff, which reward achievement in academic and personal development, are most effective in promoting children's self-esteem. Children are sensitively helped to develop independent hygiene routines.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, the staff provide excellent support and guidance for pupils. They keep a diligent eye on the happiness of all pupils, and hold rigorously minuted meetings that ensure all pupils' pastoral needs are addressed promptly and met comprehensively. This commitment to the pupils' well-being shows that the teachers know the pupils extremely well, and is reflected in the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe, secure and happy in the school. They know that if they have any concern they can approach any teacher, including at senior level. Pupils value the accessibility of the staff but also acknowledge other mechanisms for airing concerns, such as 'worry boxes' and group discussions.
- 4.11 Through PSHE, science and physical education lessons, pupils gain a good understanding of healthy living, including the benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating. Meals supplied by the school are of excellent quality, with a wide range from which to select: pupils' choices are monitored closely and all pupils, including those with particular dietary requirements, are supervised well throughout the lunch period. Guidelines for healthy morning snack products are provided and compliance with these is monitored carefully.
- 4.12 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils' behaviour is extremely good both in and out of the classroom. Their polished accomplishments garner accolades and rewards from parents, teachers and school leaders. They are motivated by the school's merit system and talk with equal pride about the achievements of others as they do of themselves. A small number of parents and pupils felt that bullying is not well handled. Examination of the school's records, however, shows that the school tracks and monitors any instances brought to its attention carefully and thoroughly to prevent further occurrence. Any incidents of bullying are taken seriously and dealt with firmly, and an ongoing log of pupils' well-considered, independently written self-reflection statements shows that the mechanisms used are successful.
- 4.13 The school council and the programme of Year 6 prefects are effective methods used by the school to seek the views of pupils. They take pride in recounting the various initiatives and improvements in their immediate environment that have been made at their own request.

- 4.14 The school has well-considered access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and has an appropriate plan to improve these further.

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 Staff in all areas of the school, from the EYFS onwards, demonstrate a high level of health and safety awareness. Excellent communication channels enable staff to communicate with the school when they are some distance from the main buildings, such as on the games field. In the EYFS, children's welfare is effectively promoted and the safeguarding of children is carefully ensured.
- 4.17 Safeguarding arrangements, including those concerning child protection training, are fully in line with requirements and official guidance. Records of staff employment are exemplary and all necessary measures to reduce risks from fire and other hazards, including regular fire drills, are carried out in all parts of the school. Highly effective health and safety arrangements are made, including a new two-bed medical room that is spacious and light, ensuring excellent provision for pupils who are ill or injured. A good number of staff have been trained in first aid. Risk assessments are thorough throughout the school. Admission and attendance registers are completed, maintained and stored efficiently and punctually, all in accordance with requirements.

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 maintain very effective oversight of all aspects of the school. They challenge the school to meet its targets, holding it to account for the quality of its work and supporting it through the expertise and experience provided by the trust and of individual members of the governing body. Since the previous inspection, governors have increased their focus on the preparatory school through the work of the preparatory school committee, hearing at first hand reports from senior staff and subject leaders, and questioning staff on their successes and areas for development.
- 5.3 The governing body has steered the school deftly through a period of change, and has set high standards for the quality of the school's leadership. Recent appointments have been successful in ensuring that the school has a senior management team with a common purpose. The governing body has invested prudently in the school's accommodation and resources to provide an excellent learning environment.
- 5.4 Governors are rigorous in ensuring that all statutory requirements are fully met. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are notably thorough, and the governors' annual review is comprehensive and clearly documented. A number of governors have undertaken safer recruitment training and a dedicated governor has responsibility for child protection. The governing body takes an active interest in the day-to-day life of the school, and governors have visited lessons to gain a useful insight into pupils' daily experiences.
- 5.5 In the EYFS governance is committed and well informed, and governors have specific educational expertise. They take a keen interest in the setting and visit the school regularly, and have contributed to staff training and development. Governance ensures all that EYFS statutory requirements are met and that policies and the development plan are regularly reviewed.

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, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 Strong leadership from senior staff ensures excellent educational provision. Senior leaders have improved pupils' academic achievement and personal development throughout the school. The senior management team strongly supports the school's aims and upholds its values. All pupils are valued and this is promoted by all teaching and non-teaching staff. The school conscientiously fulfils its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. Arrangements to train staff in their roles to ensure pupils' welfare and for health and safety are implemented effectively, including the training of all staff in safeguarding procedures.
- 5.8 Leadership and management provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the standard of their personal development.

Since the previous inspection changes in leadership have taken place and the school has made significant progress with its management structure, with strong appointments of teaching and support staff. Senior management team members are seen as approachable by pupils, staff and parents, and set themselves high standards. Effective structures ensure that all policies are reviewed and implemented.

- 5.9 Appointments of middle leaders have been successful. They are implementing new initiatives, with good target setting and a wider range of teaching approaches that promote independent learning. They monitor procedures effectively, but currently have limited time allocation to enhance further the process of monitoring and evaluation across subjects. The management of those with particular learning needs is excellent, although strategies to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils are less well developed. Since the previous inspection, the library has become more central to the life of the school, and better use of time is now made within the school day. Pastoral care is of a high standard, owing much to the focused leadership and strong support systems in operation.
- 5.10 In the EYFS, senior leadership ensures that the quality of provision is consistently high. All staff have received the required checks before commencing employment and are given clear guidance on safeguarding and health and safety procedures as part of their induction. The school arranges safeguarding training at the required intervals and the strong attention to safeguarding procedures ensures that staff are highly vigilant in this respect.
- 5.11 The evaluation and monitoring of practice in the EYFS are well established. Appraisal systems involve self-evaluation and identify strengths and areas to develop. Staff agree targets to support the development plan as well as their own personal professional development. Training and support are offered from senior management and through externally provided courses. The school has highly productive partnerships with local agencies. These enable the school to draw on professional expertise and enhance the development of the EYFS.
- 5.12 Self-evaluation is excellent and in the period since the appointment of the new leadership, the senior management team has demonstrated a clear sense of vision for school improvement and educational priorities for the future. Priorities are communicated well and all staff feel assured in this vision. The leadership has strong links with the senior management team of the senior school, whose members attend weekly management meetings. The leadership also contributes to the development of the whole school through a steering committee. The school has invested considerably in the fabric of its site, and the grounds and buildings provide an excellent environment for learning.
- 5.13 The school has appointed well-qualified and highly committed staff who make a significant contribution to the welfare and achievement of the pupils. Procedures for appointments are robust and the deployment of staff is well managed. The regular appraisal system applies to teaching staff and members of the senior management team, and this is felt to work well. All staff, including administrative and other non-teaching staff, work efficiently to ensure the success of the school.
- 5.14 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Parents of children in the EYFS are overwhelmingly supportive and extremely happy with the education their children receive. The vast majority of questionnaire responses from parents of pupils in Years 1 to 6 were also extremely positive.

- 5.15 The school has fully addressed the recommendation of the previous inspection to improve communication with the parents of EYFS children, and liaison is now highly effective. Staff are available at the beginning and end of the day, at the termly parents' consultations and by email. Regular exchange of information between home and school ensures that parents are fully engaged in their children's development and learning. Parents confirm that staff have a detailed knowledge and understanding of their children's development. In questionnaire responses and in discussion, parents were extremely appreciative of the advice and support they receive from staff. The school works closely with parents and external agencies to ensure effective support for children needing particular help with their learning and development.
- 5.16 The school promotes a strong and effective partnership with parents. Their responses to the inspection questionnaire indicated strong approval of all aspects of provision. Extra-curricular provision and pastoral care were identified as key strengths. Most parents are highly satisfied with the progress that their children are making. Communication has significantly improved since the previous inspection and parents commented that they are listened to and feel valued. A very small number of parents felt that concerns have not been handled well. Inspectors, however, found that procedures are designed to deal with concerns swiftly and effectively, and that these work well in most instances. The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. The 'open-door' policy ensures that most concerns are dealt with informally and to the parents' satisfaction.
- 5.17 Parents are kept well informed of their children's academic and social progress. Parents commented on the candour they receive from all staff either in formal written reports, which are detailed and informative, setting clear targets for improvement, or through effort and attainment grades and parents' evenings. House points and 'superstar' pupil lunches with the headmaster are a source of pride for parents and pupils alike. Parents are invited to weekly assemblies where many pupils are rewarded across a range of activities.
- 5.18 The parents' association is supportive and highly active. It provides many opportunities for parents to socialise and fund raise for the school and for charity, and the association's representatives give generously of their time. The association organises and supports events such as the Christmas Fair, coffee mornings, firework displays, quiz nights and a school ball, promoting the school's strong sense of community.
- 5.19 Throughout the school, parents welcome the wide range of excellent information provided. Extensive material is produced on the school's website, in newsletters and in a variety of high quality publications. Details of events, achievements and plans are very well communicated, and the school also updates parents by email and text message. Electronic monitors and other displays around school are informative and celebrate pupils' work and achievement. Pupils new to the school are welcomed and excellent induction information is provided, as are clear handovers when pupils transfer to different parts of the school. The senior management team is visibly accessible and this is welcomed by parents. Parents are particularly well supported in their choice of senior school options, and the school manages this effectively in conjunction with the senior school.

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