



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
HEADINGTON PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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Headington Preparatory School

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

Full Name of School	Headington Preparatory School
DfE Number	931/6064
Registered Charity Number	309678
Address	Headington Preparatory School 26 London Road Headington Oxford Oxfordshire OX3 7PB
Telephone Number	01865 759111
Fax Number	01865 760268
Email Address	enquiries@headingtonprep.org
Head	Mrs Jane Crouch
Chair of Governors	Mrs Helen Batchelor
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	244
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 33 5-11: 211
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 243
Number of Boarders	Total: 1
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Rachel Fleming
EYFS Gender	Girls
Inspection Dates	5 May 2015 to 8 May 2015

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 June 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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, 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 Graham Sims	Reporting Inspector
Mr Geoffrey Hammond	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Susie West	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Headington School was founded in 1915 by a group of evangelical Christians. It is a Church of England foundation. It comprises a senior school, which admits boarders, and Headington Preparatory School, which is a day school for girls, although one pupil currently boards for part of the week with the youngest pupils in the senior school (see the senior school report for the quality of the boarding provision). The two parts of the school are located on neighbouring sites about a mile from the centre of Oxford. The schools have a common ethos and operate as a charitable trust, administered by a single governing body.
- 1.2 The preparatory (prep) school is based in a large Victorian house, which has been extended over the years. Most recently, a major building project added a new theatre, atrium, classrooms and specialist facilities for music, art, and design and technology (DT). A new base has been provided for the learning enrichment department, which caters for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school also uses various specialist facilities at the senior school, particularly those for games and physical education (PE). The school's Nursery closed in 2013, but was reopened in 2014, with a new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children between the ages of three and five. The prep appointed a new head in April 2014, having previously had an interim head for two terms. The school's senior leadership team has been restructured over the last year.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a stimulating, enriching and forward-thinking environment for pupils where achievement, enterprise, creativity and leadership are nurtured and developed. It also seeks to promote honesty, openness, tolerance and understanding, to develop pupils' self-confidence and responsibility, and to encourage them to think of others so that they can play an active and positive part in an ever-changing world.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 244 pupils on roll, of whom 33 children were in the EYFS, which comprises a Nursery and a Reception class. There were 61 pupils in Years 1 and 2, and 150 in Years 3 to 6. The pupils come from professional and business families living in or around Oxford. Pupils are predominantly of white British heritage and a small minority come from a range of ethnic backgrounds that reflect those of the local population.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school, as determined by standardised tests, is above the national average. The school provides additional support for 24 pupils with SEND and 22 pupils with EAL. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- 1.6 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 extremely successful in fulfilling its aim to create a stimulating, enriching environment where pupils achieve well, develop self-confidence and become honest, tolerant and understanding people. Excellent teaching enables the pupils to achieve high standards in several subjects, including English and mathematics. Children make good progress in the rapidly improving EYFS, although they do not always have the opportunity to learn outdoors in all seven EYFS areas. Throughout the school, an excellent curriculum is provided, together with a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, which the pupils greatly enjoy. They have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary. The school has responded well to issues identified at the previous inspection: it makes good use of assessment information and provides many opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. However, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to develop their creativity and independent thought in science, history and geography. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently, but are not always sufficiently rigorous in indicating how pupils might improve, a feature which is also evident when teaching assistants supervise children's free-choice activities in the EYFS.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Highly supportive staff and very strong relationships enable children in the EYFS to make great progress in their personal, social and emotional development. In Years 1 to 6, pupils develop into courteous and thoughtful individuals who have an excellent understanding of fundamental British values and a keen insight into democratic processes. The pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and contribute well to local and wider communities. Almost all pupils enjoy being in the school and feel that their teachers are helpful and take an interest in them. Very high standards of pastoral care and excellent attention to pupils' welfare, health and safety help to ensure that pupils are kept safe and flourish.
- 2.3 The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities extremely well, provides excellent support for the school's leaders and ensures an exceptionally high quality of accommodation, staffing and resources. Leadership and management are excellent. The school has improved in many ways over recent months as a result of insightful self-evaluation, carefully crafted development plans and staff who are strongly supportive of the school's current direction. Leaders ensure that sensitive help is given to pupils with SEND and those with EAL, and that the most able pupils are consistently challenged. Links with parents are excellent. They are kept very well informed about their children's progress and what is happening in the school through regular communications, a wide range of workshops and information on the school's website. Parents are positive about almost every aspect of the school but, in particular, the progress which pupils are making, the range of experiences provided for them and the view that they are happy, safe and well looked after.

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) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and independent thought in science, history and geography.
2. Give more detailed and rigorous feedback when marking pupils' books to show pupils how they might improve their work.
3. Enable children in the EYFS to spend more focused time engaged in exploring the seven EYFS areas through outdoor learning, and ensure that teaching assistants always provide effective support for them.

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 Children of all abilities, including the most able and those with SEND, achieve well in the EYFS. From skills and understanding which are a little above those typical for their age, the children make good progress, so that the very large majority reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year and are starting to work beyond them. The youngest children count to ten and recognise common two-dimensional shapes. They know many sounds phonetically and are starting to build and write simple words. Older children understand how to sort objects into three categories using pre-determined criteria. They use their phonic knowledge to read simple text confidently and to write simple accounts. Children with EAL receive specialist help and rapidly begin to understand English and to make good progress. All children speak with increasingly mature fluency and clarity.
- 3.3 The children in the EYFS greatly enjoy school. They are confident, happy and eager to learn, whether working independently or within a group. They concentrate well for sustained periods, listen attentively and ask pertinent questions. They are curious about the world around them. They enjoy exploring, investigating and being creative. They ask searching questions and talk animatedly about what they are doing.
- 3.4 The pupils in the rest of the school are extremely well educated in accordance with the school's aim to nurture and develop achievement, enterprise, creativity and leadership. They develop excellent levels of understanding and a wide range of skills in their curricular and extra-curricular activities. They are highly articulate and have excellent listening, reading and writing skills. They apply mathematical skills well when solving problems. The pupils are highly competent users of ICT, and enjoy the increasing range of opportunities, for example, to use tablet computers in lessons. They engage enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities, and more than two-thirds of the pupils learn at least one musical instrument. Excellent artwork produced by pupils throughout the school and the individually presented, well-researched projects of pupils in Year 6 show great creativity and a good propensity for logical and independent thought. However, the prescriptive nature of some tasks in subjects such as science, history and geography does not always allow pupils to develop their creativity and independent thought to the fullest extent.
- 3.5 The pupils' achievements are very wide ranging. Academically, the pupils are highly successful in gaining places at the senior school or other selective independent schools. In the current Year 6, almost one-third of the pupils have been offered scholarships at a senior school, a dramatic increase over the last two years. Many pupils compete successfully in local, regional and national events in a very wide range of sports, with particular distinction gained in gymnastics, cross-country, swimming, hockey and biathlon. A significant number of pupils gain success in music examinations, from those just starting to play a musical instrument to a few who show exceptional talent and achieve at the very highest level. They also achieve success in various competitions, such as a national mathematics challenge. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils felt that they are making good progress and find the work interesting. Parents, too, are very pleased with their children's progress.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent. Inspection judgements, and the school's own assessments of pupils' performance in relation to national targets, indicate that the very large majority of pupils comfortably exceed the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This level of attainment, as judged by observations made during the inspection, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and the school's own monitoring information, indicates that pupils make at least good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND and those with EAL make excellent progress in relation to their individual needs. This is as a result of careful analysis of their needs, highly individualised support and close monitoring of their progress. The most able pupils also make excellent progress, and their 'stretch and challenge' activities provide additional opportunities for them to succeed beyond the classroom.
- 3.7 The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are highly attentive in class. All are willing to participate and to respond to teachers' questions. They show particular enthusiasm when engaged in practical activity, in learning outside the classroom or when given the freedom to conduct their own research or pursue their own interests. Pupils' enthusiasm is also demonstrated by the large numbers engaging very successfully in the many extra-curricular activities that take place before and after school, and during every morning and lunch break. The pupils collaborate extremely well when working with a partner or as a small group. When asked to work on their own, they settle down to their individual tasks quickly and with concentration. When given the opportunity, they are happy to take the initiative and to organise their work. By the time they reach Year 6, the pupils are extremely well prepared for their move to senior school.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 Curricular provision in the EYFS is good. It meets the needs of the range of children who attend, both in the Nursery and Reception, enabling them to reach expected levels of development and beyond by the time they start Year 1. The programmes are rich and varied, and take account of children's interests. They provide many opportunities for children to learn new skills, such as early sight reading of music and playing simple tunes. There is an increasingly good balance of activities that are led by adults and devised by the children themselves. The introduction of a more rigorous programme to teach phonics has had a beneficial impact on improving children's early reading and writing skills.
- 3.10 In Years 1 to 6, the school offers a broad, well-structured curriculum. It is highly effective in its coverage of the required areas of learning and makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievements. Curricular planning actively promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, and ensures that there is balanced presentation of opposing views when considering political issues. The curriculum encourages pupils of all ages and abilities to embrace learning positively, and it strongly supports the school's aims of giving every pupil the opportunity to excel and be proud. It is efficiently timetabled to enable pupils to experience learning beyond the basic requirements, though the 30-minute length of some lessons can sometimes lead to a sense of frustration for pupils who would rather their PE and drama lessons were longer. The curriculum includes a highly effective personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, and this supports and contributes

to the emotional development of the pupils, and helps them to be confident and resilient.

- 3.11 Recent developments have made clear the school's desire to make the curriculum rich and exciting. French has been introduced to the very youngest pupils and drama is an integral part of the creative curriculum. The new art, design and technology studio has allowed the curriculums of both these subjects to flourish. All pupils now have the opportunity to cook each term, while initiatives involving the science, ICT and DT departments are at the forefront of proposed cross-curricular creativity.
- 3.12 The school has enlightened and thorough arrangements to identify and support from an early stage pupils who might require extra support to access the curriculum fully. For pupils with EAL or SEND, support is provided within the classroom and on a one-to-one basis in specialist lessons. The most able pupils, or those who are particularly gifted or talented, are very well supported. Clubs, such as 'stretch and challenge', meet their needs, and there are also opportunities outside the school such as 'able writing days'.
- 3.13 Extra-curricular provision is excellent. It considerably enhances the curriculum and is highly appreciated by the pupils. Over 70 clubs take place before school, at break, at lunchtime and after school, and these reflect the enthusiasm and interests of both teachers and pupils. They extend key curricular areas such as sport, music and art, and offer further opportunities to enrich the curriculum for those receiving learning support.
- 3.14 The pupils' experiences are enhanced by links with the local community, through visits, both day and residential, and by visitors. The Tudor period was brought alive for those who visited an Elizabethan manor house and educational charity, while pupils in Year 3 who made soup for those in a centre for the homeless were moved when some whom they had helped came to the school and spoke about what it is like to be without a home.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Teaching in the EYFS is at least of good quality and sometimes it is excellent. The teachers are knowledgeable and know how to promote children's learning and development, as seen in the way they ask searching questions and provide interesting information that stimulates, extends and intrigues the children. Children are encouraged to ask questions, to think and to reason. The activities are often fun, and many are adapted for children of differing abilities. A new and detailed assessment system is being used well to guide teachers' planning, which is extensive and of good quality. In response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, assessment of the most able is now used to ensure that they are suitably challenged in literacy and mathematics sessions. Resources are plentiful, of good quality and used imaginatively. The spacious indoor accommodation is used well. The attractive outdoor area, which is adequate for the current number of children, is used each day, but does not always sufficiently support children's learning experiences. The role of the teaching assistant has not yet been developed sufficiently to support and extend children's learning both indoors and outside. Sometimes children are not challenged sufficiently when engaged in child-imitated tasks, and they are not consistently encouraged to be independent.

- 3.17 In Years 1 to 6, well-informed teaching supports the school's aims and makes a strong contribution to the pupils' high levels of progress and achievement. Specialist teaching in several subjects and activities enhances the knowledge and expertise available to pupils, while carefully planned lessons provide both structure and the opportunity for challenge. As a result, the pupils are highly motivated and engage enthusiastically in all lessons; there is an invigorating atmosphere of learning in the classroom.
- 3.18 The school has developed a clear programme of assessment, and staff have up-to-date attainment data to ensure that they plan the next steps in learning for pupils and support their needs. Throughout the school, the use of 'talking partners' motivates the pupils, enriches the flow of ideas and promotes immediate peer assessment. Marking is undertaken with obvious care to ensure that the pupils feel good about what they are achieving. However, the apparent lack in some books of follow-up to errors or comments to make clear what was successful and why, means that not all marking is effective at showing pupils how best to develop their success further. In interviews, pupils were unanimous in valuing written comments that prompt them to reflect. Almost all of the pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their teachers help them to learn and offer individual support when needed.
- 3.19 Throughout the school, teaching is characterised by strong knowledge and, in particular subjects, by passion and enthusiasm which are both infectious and effective. Topics are covered in a non-partisan way, which promotes tolerance and respect for the views of others. Time is managed efficiently and resources are used increasingly productively. In many lessons, the use of tablet computers promotes learning, for example allowing staff to focus on mathematical weaknesses, or pupils to share with the whole class discussions they previously had with each other. The well-stocked library is used by pupils to read for pleasure and as a further resource for research.
- 3.20 Much work has been undertaken recently to help staff to develop further their teaching, and in the most successful lessons the teaching fosters both interest and independence. In many subjects pupils value highly the school's encouragement of research and independent thought, promoting exciting opportunities for them to decide in which direction their enthusiasm may take them. However, in some other lessons, teacher-directed learning clearly and effectively meets learning objectives but limits pupils' independence.
- 3.21 Pupils with particular learning needs are strongly supported in many ways. Staff regularly communicate about pupils' needs, and about related planning and strategies. Extension activities are carefully created for the most able in the class. Mathematics is set according to ability in Years 3 to 6. Teaching assistants help in many classes, and excellent assistance is given both within the classroom and through withdrawal lessons for those who have EAL or SEND.

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, children develop excellent personal and social skills as they learn to co-operate and share, joining in activities with others and working extremely well in pairs. Their relationships with staff and other children are warm and trusting, and they demonstrate excellent capacity to respect and tolerate each other's differences. Their behaviour is exemplary at all times. They display a well-developed ability to make appropriate choices and decisions. They are extremely well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- 4.3 The aims of the school actively promote fundamental British values of honesty, openness, tolerance and understanding. Furthermore, the school aims to develop a sense of responsibility, encouraging pupils to think of others, thereby equipping them to play an active and positive part in an ever-changing world. It is highly successful in fulfilling these aims, as pupils reach an extremely high level of personal development by the time they leave.
- 4.4 The pupils develop excellent levels of self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. They develop a good ability to reflect, for example through the annual prayer space sessions for each year group led by the chaplain. Pupils use these and other opportunities to discuss with great sensitivity and respect universal values such as dignity and compassion. They develop a strong understanding of the spiritual significance of the Christian faith and thoughtfully consider other spiritual issues through the wide-ranging programme of assembly topics. Their eager participation and enjoyment in making music and creating artwork show their ready appreciation of non-material aspects of life. They welcome opportunities for open-ended debate, and their responses to questions show maturity and awareness beyond their years.
- 4.5 The pupils acquire and display a strong sense of moral values in their everyday encounters. They have a well-developed understanding of moral and ethical issues, readily discussing what is right and wrong, expressing their feelings openly and cogently, and demonstrating fairness and kindness. This builds a firm foundation for their understanding of and respect for the civil and criminal law of England. They respect each other and the adults who care for them in school. They articulate a profound sense of loyalty to the school, and an appreciation for the guidance they receive from the staff.
- 4.6 Pupils' social awareness is highly developed. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. They enthusiastically take advantage of the opportunities to undertake roles of responsibility in the school, for example on the 'eco' committee, as librarians or as digital leaders. Their election of representatives, canvassing of the views of their peers and participation in school council meetings help them to develop an excellent understanding of the democratic process. They develop a strong awareness of those less fortunate than themselves through their involvement in whole-school or year group charitable events, many of which they organise themselves. They have a keen desire to help, whether sending clothes to a school in Africa or holding bake sales for an international charity.

- 4.7 The pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures. They articulate differences and relate them to their own experiences, exchanging comments and comparisons freely and easily in religious education and PSHE lessons. They develop tolerant and harmonious relationships with one another, and demonstrate a mature understanding of each other's difficulties and differences, resulting in a community without any form of discrimination.
- 4.8 The pupils have an evolving awareness of British public institutions, as the school seeks to take a more active role in developing their understanding through visits, for example to a local hospital, and forthcoming trips, such as those to the Houses of Parliament for Year 6. Pupils' understanding of the democratic process was greatly enhanced through the school's own mock election, which was then followed by a second election in which pupils formed their own parties and drew up their own manifestos. Pupils were shown an excellent film of how younger citizens from their school can influence local decisions, for example by addressing the local authority on an issue about which they had strong views.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 Provision for children's well-being in the EYFS is excellent. All children have a 'key person' who ensures that their needs are met, and this particular relationship, introduced at the start of the academic year, is proving successful. Staff form strong, united teams who create tranquil, focused atmospheres in which the children feel safe. They promote kindness and excellent relationships, and maintain high expectations of good behaviour. The children are encouraged to work together harmoniously and to respect each other. Paired activities help them to listen to and respect others' views from an early age. They start to understand the effect of exercise and know which foods are healthy. Staff have taught the children about the importance of good hygiene.
- 4.11 In Years 1 to 6, the staff provide very effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims, which makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and pupils know that they can go to a variety of staff members if they need help or support. Pastoral issues are discussed and resolved well during form periods. The house system encourages older pupils to support younger pupils, while the older girls feel the staff prepare them well for their move to the senior school. Care given to any pupils who board is extremely good; boarders know that they can approach a wide range of staff, as well as the independent listener, should they have a concern.
- 4.12 The school promotes healthy eating and an active lifestyle very effectively. The pupils enjoy excellent lunches, which cater extremely well for all dietary requirements. The very wide range of timetabled and extra-curricular physical activities ensures that all pupils take regular exercise.
- 4.13 The school is extremely effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying, including cyber-bullying. The comprehensive anti-bullying policies are implemented well, and incidents are very rare. As a result, the pupils feel secure in school. Clear structures are in place to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. The pupils and staff show an acute sensitivity to those with any difficulty or disability. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which rewards and sanctions are

given. On examining the school's records, inspectors found that the system is used consistently and has been highly effective in improving pupils' behaviour. The need for giving penalty points is reducing rapidly.

- 4.14 A small minority of pupils expressed in questionnaire responses that they do not feel the school asks for their opinions. Inspectors found that the school council, 'worry boxes' in classrooms and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils provide effective mechanisms for gathering the views of the pupils. At school council meetings, pupils make suggestions with regard to food, activities, playground equipment and fund-raising events, among other things, and senior staff take these views into consideration.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND, and the learning enrichment department provides a secure environment that has a positive impact on the personal development and academic progress of those who attend.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 In the EYFS, children's welfare is promoted very effectively and the safeguarding of children is assured. High priority is given to ensuring that children feel safe and secure so that they grow in confidence when trying new activities, with adult support, independently or when working in groups. Staff have a thorough understanding of child protection measures and health and safety requirements. Training is appropriate and up to date. Daily programmes reflect the latest EYFS guidance and policies have been updated.
- 4.18 In Years 1 to 6, safeguarding arrangements have due regard to official guidance. Efficient implementation of detailed policies and procedures ensures that pupils are safeguarded with rigorous attention to detail. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and have undertaken child protection training as required. Senior staff and governors with designated responsibility for safeguarding update their training every two years. Detailed notes are kept of any incidents, and the school has excellent links with the local safeguarding children's board. Procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff are followed rigorously.
- 4.19 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 professionals 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. Effective measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Fire drills are carried out regularly, and staff receive informative and up-to-date training.
- 4.20 Arrangements for the treatment of sick or injured pupils are excellent. The large majority of staff are trained in first aid. The school has appropriate facilities to deal with any pupil who is unwell and keeps detailed records of any treatment or medicines given. Parents are informed of any action taken. Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils with SEND are also meticulous.
- 4.21 Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and are securely stored as required.

- 4.22 All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated strongly that their children are happy and feel safe in school, and think that they are well looked after. Inspection findings support these views.

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 maintains extremely effective oversight of the prep school and ensures that it fulfils its aim to provide a stimulating, enriching and forward-thinking environment for all pupils. Governors' involvement in the EYFS is effective. The governing body's responsibility in shaping the strategic direction of the school has resulted in rising educational standards and highly effective leadership that has brought many improvements to the school. Governors' approval of major financial investment to develop the school's facilities has provided excellent, extremely well-maintained accommodation that makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. Their commitment to providing specialist staff and excellent resources also has a very positive impact on the quality of learning.
- 5.3 Through meetings of its committees, frequent visits to the school to observe teaching, activities and special events, meetings with staff and reports from the school's leaders, the governing body gains an excellent insight into the working of the school. Governors are, therefore, very well placed to exercise their monitoring role and to hold leaders to account for the quality of care and education. Their professional expertise and level of interest ensure a high level of support for leaders and serve as a stimulus for growth and improvement.
- 5.4 The governing body is highly effective in discharging its responsibilities for statutory requirements, all of which are met, and many of which, including welfare, health and safety, are carried out to extremely high standards. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are monitored carefully, through the governing body's annual review and through regular meetings with the school's designated safeguarding leads.

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 excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. Since the previous inspection, new leadership has brought dynamism and clear-sightedness to the management of the EYFS. Many judicious and necessary initiatives have been carried out, including a new method of recording assessment, extremely detailed planning and better outdoor provision. Many of the initiatives, however, have not been in place sufficiently long to judge their full impact on provision or outcomes for the children. The leadership promotes a stimulating environment for the children and rigorous attention to their safety. The action plan for the EYFS identifies clear priorities for improvement derived from effective and insightful self-evaluation. Educational provision is monitored carefully, and staff appreciate the opportunities for supervision, professional development and the training they receive as a result.
- 5.7 At all levels of responsibility in the rest of the school, leaders are highly effective in fulfilling the school's aims and in discharging delegated responsibilities. Leaders provide a stimulating and enriching environment for pupils of all abilities, which encourages them to learn. Highly effective arrangements for pastoral care ensure

that the pupils are valued, and that honesty, openness, tolerance and understanding are promoted. A carefully planned programme, delivered through assemblies and PSHE lessons, ensures pupils to develop respect for others and for the democratic values of the country, in line with the ethos of the school. Leaders ensure that the school's carefully thought out policies are implemented in practice. Procedures implemented over the last year ensure significantly closer and more careful monitoring of pupils' behaviour, attendance and academic progress. Any trends are identified quickly, and effective corrective action is taken if necessary.

- 5.8 The school's leaders provide very clear educational direction. Over the last year, the senior leadership team has been reorganised and strengthened. Much greater responsibility has been given to subject leaders, who now make a good contribution to overseeing the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work in their subject areas. There is a palpable sense of unity among the staff and a strong enthusiasm for implementing the areas for development identified in the school's well-conceived development plan, to which all staff have had the opportunity to contribute. In their responses to the questionnaire, all parents felt that the school is led and managed well, and many expressed their appreciation for the new direction evident within the school's leadership.
- 5.9 Leadership staff have been highly effective in evaluating the school's strengths and areas for development, and for formulating and implementing plans to bring about improvement. Priorities for development have been communicated clearly to staff, who have made a concerted effort to raise standards and improve the quality of education in many respects. Provision has improved in the EYFS. Much greater use is made of ICT across the school. The recent Artsmark award from Arts Council England attests to the excellence of work in the creative arts. The introduction of a new reading programme is helping pupils to become proficient readers at a much earlier age. Opportunities for independent and personalised learning are not yet fully realised in all classes, although the school has responded positively to the issue identified at the previous inspection by providing many more means for pupils to exercise their independence.
- 5.10 Leaders have been highly successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff. The introduction of more subject-specialist teaching throughout the school is raising standards. A new appraisal system has helped to improve the quality of teaching. Staff appreciate the wide-ranging programme of professional development, which has inspired them to improve their skills and to plan more carefully than previously to meet the needs of all pupils. Staff comment that despite the increase in time demands arising from changes made by the senior leadership team, they are very happy with arrangements as they are able to see the benefit of the changes and impact on outcomes for pupils. They fully support the school's leaders and feel highly motivated to try out new ideas and bring even further improvement to the education which they provide.
- 5.11 The school has rigorous procedures to check the suitability of staff, governors and others who work with children. These are administered centrally and efficiently by a team based in the senior school. The support provided by the central team ensures meticulous attention to health and safety, and stringent procedures for the safeguarding of pupils. In addition, training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety is thorough, and all staff have an excellent understanding of the school's procedures.

- 5.12 Throughout the school, the quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Parents indicated in their comments and responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they are highly appreciative of the education and support provided for their children, and of the interest which the school takes in them as valued individuals.
- 5.13 In the EYFS, parents highly value the welcome the school extends to them and the interest it takes in their children. Parents are welcomed into the school at the start and end of each day, and this builds trusting relationships between home and school, and provides opportunities to talk to staff. They greatly appreciate the family atmosphere. They feel well informed about their children's activities and progress. The good liaison between school and home encourages parents to support their children's learning and gives them confidence that any additional help their children might require will be provided. Towards the end of each school year, detailed records concerning each child are discussed with new teachers. All children are taught first by their new teacher and then spend an afternoon in their new classroom. This ensures that children move confidently to the next stage of their education.
- 5.14 Across the school a very constructive relationship is maintained with parents, in accordance with the school's aims. Parents who are new to the school receive a warm welcome and meet all staff at a sociable evening meeting. Coffee mornings are held and numerous opportunities are available for parents to learn about the life and work of the school through sessions on the teaching of a range of subjects. Through these meetings and in providing voluntary help, parents have many opportunities to be actively involved in the work of the school and the progress of their children. The Parents' Association operates as a highly successful fund-raising body across both the prep and senior schools. In addition, form representatives meet termly, providing feedback on clubs, raising any concerns and bringing to the school's attention items such as footpath safety and suggestions for new activities.
- 5.15 A very large majority of parents praised the ease of communication with staff, although a very small minority felt that it is difficult to obtain the information they request. Inspectors found that teachers are readily accessible and willing to engage with parents. They use planning books, link diaries or electronic means to ensure that parents are kept up to date with information. An efficient electronic communication system operates in the case of last-minute cancellations of matches and other emergencies. Two parents' evenings are organised each year, when all teachers, including peripatetic staff, are available. In addition, a detailed annual report on pupils' achievement and progress gives targets in each subject for the pupils to work towards. General information is disseminated by electronic means and fortnightly newsletters. All necessary information about the school is available for parents of current and prospective pupils on the school's website.
- 5.16 The school handles any concerns of parents with care and in accordance with its published procedures. Parents are encouraged to come into school if a concern arises.

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