



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

HERRIES SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Herries School

Full Name of School	Herries School
DfE Number	868/6003
Registered Charity Number	1085930
Address	Herries School Dean Lane Cookham Dean Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 9BD
Telephone Number	01628 483350
Fax Number	01628 483329
Email Address	office@herries.org.uk
Head	Ms Sophie Green
Chair of Governors	Miss Nicki Coombs
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	82
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (41 boys; 41 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 26 5-11: 56
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Lyn Senior
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	14 May 2013 to 17 May 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 May 2010.

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. 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', '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, 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 Penny Horsman

Mr Howard Tuckett

Miss Jacqueline Scotney

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Herries School is a co-educational preparatory day school for pupils aged three to eleven years, situated in a rural area just outside the village of Cookham Dean in Berkshire. The school was founded in 1947, based in an Edwardian house that has been extended over the years to provide extra accommodation, most recently a new school hall. The school is a charitable trust with a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of head and the senior management team has been enlarged.
- 1.2 The school aims to be an inclusive learning community, based on Christian principles, which welcomes and provides for children of all faiths and nationalities. It seeks to nurture and challenge pupils to achieve their very best in a caring environment, where individual talents can be explored and developed, and to ensure that all pupils who leave the school are ready for the next step in their education.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 82 pupils, 41 boys and 41 girls, were on roll. This included 17 boys and 9 girls in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Thirteen pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and seven of these receive specialist help. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and both receive support. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from families with professional backgrounds, who live in the villages and towns surrounding the school. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage, with a small minority of pupils representing a range of other cultures and faiths.
- 1.4 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 Herries School successfully fulfils its aims to enable pupils to find joy in learning and to prepare each one as a unique individual to live a happy, purposeful and balanced life. Pupils of all ages, including those in the EYFS, are well educated, enjoy school and make good progress. All staff are committed to the care and well-being of the pupils in their charge. Good teaching contributes to the pupils' good levels of achievement. Sport, music and drama, together with a range of visits and activities and the good curriculum, enhance the pupils' learning and development. Their behaviour and positive attitudes also contribute to their effective progress. However, pupils' use of their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and employment of the ICT resources across the curriculum are limited. All pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, flourish in a secure and happy community. Consequently, achievement is good, enabling most pupils to secure places at the senior school of their first choice.
- 2.2 The excellent pastoral care encourages pupils to learn and contributes significantly to their outstanding personal development. The friendly and positive relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are a particularly strong feature of the school. In this caring and happy environment the pupils grow into confident, mature young people who are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their lives. Following the school's positive response to the previous inspection, the arrangements for the welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 2.3 With the strong support of the governors, the excellent leadership ensures that the ethos and values of the school are successfully maintained. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that an overwhelming majority are extremely happy both with the education provided and the high standard of care. Leadership has ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. Systems have been developed to monitor teaching and learning in order to raise all teaching to the standard of the best, but this is not yet wholly consistent, including in the EYFS. Future and continuous improvement is now a priority and the leadership staff provide clear educational direction, ensuring that policies are implemented effectively. A rigorous approach to reviewing both the curriculum and extra-curricular programme across all stages of learning has been developed. Marking is constructive and sets targets for improvement. Consistent planning across all subjects ensures the provision of appropriate work for pupils' differing abilities, and a revised appraisal system identifies professional development needs for staff. Governors play a significant role within the school, visiting regularly and communicating effectively with leaders and other staff, and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and maintained.

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. Make more effective use of the existing ICT resources as a tool for teaching and for the pupils' independent research across the curriculum.
2. Ensure that the qualities of the best teaching which foster pupils' independence and their investigative, creative and critical thinking skills are extended to all teaching, including in the EYFS.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated and successful in their learning across the curriculum and in their activities. In lessons and in their written work they show good understanding and make good progress. The school successfully fulfils its aim to provide a broad academic education and to prepare each child as a unique individual to live a happy, balanced and purposeful life.
- 3.3 Pupils generally listen well to each other. From an early age they speak and read with confidence and often engage in classroom discussion with their teachers, which enhances their learning. They are articulate and confident when speaking with adults. Younger pupils demonstrated good developing writing skills when they wrote about their recent visit to an activity centre. Pupils acquire good mathematical skills and are able to use these to very good effect; for example, younger pupils recognise and construct symmetrical two-dimensional shapes. Skills in ICT are developed well in discrete lessons but pupils do not use these skills regularly as a tool for independent learning or research. Logical thought is successfully developed, such as when older pupils discussed a deer hunt and empathised from the perspective of either the hunter or the animal. Investigative skills are developed in science across all year groups; younger pupils were absorbed in constructing a fair test to find out how far a car driven by an elastic band would travel.
- 3.4 The pupils' physical skills develop well in the opportunities provided, both on and off site for physical education, sport and recreational activity within and outside the curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to represent the school and matches are played against other schools. Creative skills are evident in the pupils' artwork, some of which is on display around the school, and are also seen in the many photographs of pupils taking part in musical and dramatic activities. All pupils participate regularly in school productions. Achievements in music and drama examinations are celebrated in assemblies, as is the success of individuals in other activities that take place both in and out of school.
- 3.5 In the EYFS, all children, including those with EAL or SEND, make good progress according to their starting points. Younger children enjoy active learning through play. They develop their creative skills well, such as in free painting and collage, and are seen to think critically whilst participating in group play. They also display a keen interest in books and a good ability to listen to and recall stories, and confidently use numbers within 20 in their play and routines. Older children demonstrate well-developed, age-appropriate skills in literacy and numeracy. They use phonic knowledge to write and read simple words and make very good progress with their news writing.
- 3.6 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available from work scrutiny and lessons observed, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. This includes pupils with SEND or EAL who demonstrate good understanding and whose workbooks show improvement in writing in response to the help they receive in teaching. When they leave the school at the age of eleven, many pupils transfer to the senior school of their first choice.

- 3.7 In the EYFS children demonstrate an eagerness to learn, particularly when provided with an interesting stimulus. Reception children were captivated when examining bubbles.
- 3.8 Pupils thrive in the atmosphere of hard work, enjoyment and effort. Their attitude to their work is excellent and they take pride in both their achievements and those of others. During lessons they generally sustain high levels of concentration, and when given the opportunity for collaborative learning, work well together.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 Pupils benefit from an effective coverage of the requisite areas of learning and the curriculum is suitable for their needs. This accords with the aim of the school to stimulate and nurture the talents of pupils. The curriculum is well balanced across the age range and offers each pupil the opportunity to perform to a good academic level. Thinking skills are taught as a discrete subject for the older pupils, while personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught to all pupils.
- 3.11 Curriculum planning is excellent and is uniform in style and detail across the school. The plans relate clearly to the school's stated aims and policies. The necessary actions identified at the previous inspection to improve both the curriculum, including for those with SEND or EAL, and time allocation for each subject have been implemented, and the activities programme has been enhanced. New curriculum leadership has had a positive effect. This development has been further assisted by a change to specialist subject teaching for older pupils. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well catered for with individual education plans that are disseminated to all teachers, and some pupils receive individual learning support lessons. The more able pupils are well provided for in some subjects when the challenges outlined in planning are provided for them.
- 3.12 The needs of the range of children who attend the EYFS are met effectively. The educational programmes cover all areas of learning well and enable children to make good progress according to their starting points. Staff know the children very well. As a result, suitable challenge and support are provided for individuals. An appropriate balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to choose for themselves is maintained both indoors and out. The children's investigative and critical thinking skills are encouraged through a wide range of practical activities, such as when younger children delighted in investigating how a pulley system would help to lift a bag of bricks in their pretend builders' yard.
- 3.13 The curriculum is enriched by a significant number of trips to places such as museums and stately homes. All older pupils go on a residential trip to an activity camp in the summer term. Much use is made of the local countryside surrounding the school for scientific investigation and the development of skills in art. Visitors to the school who speak on various topics also provide enrichment.
- 3.14 The range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school is good and includes tennis coaching, gardening, collage and keep fit. Good community links have been established to use sports fields and a swimming pool belonging to nearby organisations. Pupils use the local church for services at certain times of the year and take part in the village festival. A before-school club and a homework club are provided at the start and end of the school day.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 The most successful teaching includes skilful questioning techniques, opportunities for collaborative learning and extension tasks for the most able pupils. Older pupils worked together very effectively in science to explore the reasons for condensation forming on the outside of a beaker containing iced water. Their observations and reasoning were enriched by open-ended questions posed to them and the use of appropriate vocabulary. In some cases, teaching in the EYFS engages children in a variety of activities that bring learning to life through play and exploration. The children's transition into the next year group is aided by some more formal teaching in Reception.
- 3.17 The small teaching groups provide good opportunities for the more able pupils to be challenged. All lesson plans describe provision for challenging these pupils. However, in some teaching the pace of the lesson is not sufficiently brisk, or teacher expectations are not sufficiently high, for these pupils. The needs of pupils with SEND or EAL are included in all lesson plans, which, together with the individual education plans communicated to all teachers, enables these pupils to be catered for well. Behaviour in lessons is generally good as the result of the high expectations of the staff.
- 3.18 On the few occasions observed when teaching was less successful, it was overly directed by the teacher and did not include opportunities for pupils either to think independently. As a result, the rate of the pupils' progress was slower. Good subject knowledge is evident in most teaching.
- 3.19 Teaching is well planned throughout the school in a common style that follows the procedures outlined in subject policies. Planning is based on a good understanding of the pupils' needs. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, curriculum leaders have developed a comprehensive record system to track the pupils' progress. This ensures that assessment information is used to guide the planning of work. The system is based on a combination of standardised tests and regular moderation of work against age-expected levels of achievement. In the EYFS, consistent assessment and planning procedures are of good quality. Staff track each child's progress effectively and use their assessments to help plan appropriate next steps.
- 3.20 The clear marking policy which operates throughout the school enables teachers to assess work and set targets for future improvement. The policy and explanatory notes are displayed prominently in a central location. Pupils stated in discussions that they are appreciative of the assistance they receive from the marking of their work.
- 3.21 A variety of teaching methods is used across the school. In a design technology lesson, pupils moved from collaborative discussions to a mind-mapping exercise and then on to a formal writing task with ease and to great effect. A range of good quality teaching and learning resources is used in lessons. These provide activities that engage children in the EYFS. Resources in ICT across the school are good but are not, at present, used to full effect in teaching, either in presentation or in setting tasks for pupils to use it as a tool for independent work or research.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the school the pupils' personal development is of the highest quality. This is in accordance with the aims of the school to create an understanding and nurturing environment that enables pupils to develop respect, empathy, compassion and kindness. In the EYFS the children's personal, social and emotional development is strong. Children treat one another with respect and accept each other's differences. Older pupils offer mature, self-critical observations of their work and behaviour. They develop an understanding of non-material aspects of life and show an appreciation of values such as friendship and tolerance. Pupils have a strong sense of self-esteem as a result of the recognition they receive for their success and achievements both in class and assemblies.
- 4.3 From an early age pupils demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong, and excellent moral awareness. All pupils have respect for others and are encouraged to involve each other in resolving pastoral issues. They respond well to the school's high expectations. Pupils are aware of rights and wrongs in society and of care for their environment. A day was recently held to focus on environmental issues and pupils discussed ways to help in their school council meeting.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. Younger children in the EYFS often remind their peers of the importance of sharing and older children confidently take on roles of responsibility. Older pupils recognise their school council to be a democratic forum for their views and aspirations to be aired and considered, and children in Reception are included. Social and political topics are debated in subjects such as history and PSHE in a non-biased way. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others beyond their school and the whole school actively contributes to those in society who are less fortunate than themselves; for example by providing shoe boxes full of gifts for overseas children at Christmas.
- 4.5 The pupils have an excellent appreciation of and respect for their own and other faiths and cultures. They were able to discuss confidently that the school population represents different religious beliefs and that each enshrines values of tolerance, care, forgiveness and empathy. The curriculum enhances their understanding of the lives of people in other countries, for example in geography, PSHE and religious studies. Pupils develop an insight into the values and customs of other traditions as well as their own through visits to museums, art galleries and places of historical interest. A visitor from a charity supporting an environmental project in Africa inspired the pupils to raise money, and they send second-hand books to African countries to enrich the lives of children who have far less than them.
- 4.6 By the time they are ready to leave at the age of 11, the pupils' personal development is excellent. They feel ready to move on and well prepared for their next schools.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Pastoral care is a high priority shared by staff throughout the school. They provide effective support and guidance, in accordance with the school's aim to enable pupils to benefit from belonging to a nurturing community. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. Weekly meetings ensure that staff are aware of all pastoral matters and a robust system is used to record any issues that arise.
- 4.9 In the EYFS all children have a key person who knows them very well, and staff have excellent relationships with the children in their care. Staff serve as excellent role models and have high expectations of the children's behaviour. Great importance is placed upon keeping children safe from harm whilst providing them with the opportunity to develop confidence, independence and relationships with others.
- 4.10 The house system promotes healthy competition amongst pupils and offers opportunities for leadership roles. Effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies are implemented vigilantly by staff, meeting requirements. A small number of pupils expressed concern that incidents of bullying are not dealt with appropriately. Thorough inspection found no evidence to support these views. All concerns raised are dealt with swiftly and comprehensive records are kept. All pupils interviewed and spoken to informally were clear that should a concern arise there is a member of staff to whom they could turn.
- 4.11 Throughout the school the benefits of healthy eating and the importance of physical exercise are emphasised. In the EYFS children are encouraged to undertake hygiene routines by themselves. From an early age, children demonstrate an interest in healthy eating. At lunchtime, well-balanced meals, with the option to have second helpings, are available. Parents appreciate the close attention given to dietary needs. The school has a suitable three-year plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 Opportunities are provided for pupils to serve on the school council. Minutes of the meetings are given to all members to report back to their classes and are also discussed in assemblies. Pupils appreciate the fact that actions have been taken following recommendations from both the school council and the food committee. A 'buddy bench' in the playground and the inclusion of particular foods in the lunch menu are both results of pupils' suggestions. Pupils themselves wrote the school code of conduct.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 All requirements, including those to do with safeguarding children, health and safety, and fire practices, are now met and have regard to official guidance. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and all staff are trained at the appropriate level in child protection. The school regards safeguarding and pupils' safety as a high priority and maintains close and effective relationships with local children's services.
- 4.15 In the EYFS, staff take great care concerning children's welfare in vigilantly following the school's procedures for safeguarding. Excellent systems for the on-going use of risk assessments and a clear understanding of the school's health and safety routines also assist staff in ensuring children's safety. The children have a sound understanding of safety routines.
- 4.16 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, with thorough risk assessments covering all areas of the school. Every room has an up-to-date risk assessment on display. Regular fire drills are held and appropriate records are kept. All staff have received clear guidelines on fire safety and are given regular updates. Electrical testing is comprehensive and is recorded appropriately.
- 4.17 Pupils who are ill or injured are cared for in a suitable medical room and careful records are maintained. All staff receive training in first aid, with many trained in paediatric first aid. A health and safety committee meets termly and carries out its role effectively, keeping detailed minutes of all meetings and reporting to the governors.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored.

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 provide strong support to all sections of the school, including the EYFS. Since the previous inspection membership of the governing body has undergone considerable change. The current structure ensures that governors provide a valuable blend of experience and expertise, and all members have dedicated responsibility for various areas of the work of the governing body. Governors have ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection have been met and their support has aided the excellent progress that the school has made. Governors are highly successful in providing the stimulus and support to ensure an effective education and excellent personal development for pupils, in line with their needs and the school's aims. They exercise prudent financial control and have ensured that the school benefits from high quality staff, accommodation and resources. They have been actively involved with all members of the staff in discussing and formulating plans for the strategic development of the school.
- 5.3 Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities and the governing body as a whole now regularly reviews all policies and procedures, including the annual review of that for safeguarding, and safer recruitment, welfare, health and safety. All governors have received training in child protection and many have attended other relevant courses. They make regular visits to the school, including to the EYFS, and comprehensive records are kept of these visits. This ensures that they have good insight into the daily experience of the pupils and staff. Governors communicate effectively with leaders and other staff, and ensure that all statutory requirements are met and maintained.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.5 Staff, parents and pupils respect the strong commitment shown in the way the school is led. The senior leaders ensure that the school fulfils its aims to maintain a family community where confidence and self-esteem, together with respect for others, are paramount. The excellent personal qualities of the pupils and the good level of their achievements result from the ethos that has been created and the example set by the senior leaders. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and in interviews, pupils reported that they enjoy being at the school and are very proud of it.
- 5.6 Leadership has ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. This has aided the significant progress that the school has made. Appropriate systems have been developed to monitor teaching and learning within the school, which are improving teaching. Leaders now have a sharp focus for future and continuous improvement, and they provide clear educational direction, ensuring that policies are in place and implemented effectively, including in the EYFS. Priorities have been identified through self-evaluation and discussion with all staff and governors. A consistent approach to planning and reviewing the curriculum and extra-curricular activities at all ages has been developed. Robust marking and

assessment policies ensure that marking is constructive and sets targets for improvement. The outcomes of assessment are used in planning to provide appropriate work for pupils' differing abilities. A revised appraisal system identifies professional development needs for staff.

- 5.7 The good leadership of the EYFS includes a clear overview of planning. Since the previous inspection, closer links between the Nursery and Reception have resulted in a consistent approach to planning and assessment. Regular EYFS staff meetings and a cycle of appraisal ensure that staff are supervised appropriately. All staff contribute to self-evaluation and development planning, which help drive future development.
- 5.8 All staff receive the appropriate training in safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety. Safe recruitment procedures are followed when new staff and governors are appointed and the required checks are recorded accurately on the single central register. Safeguarding the pupils is seen as a priority, and their welfare, health and safety are assured through the consistent implementation of suitable policies and procedures. This results in an environment which is welcoming, safe and stimulating. Induction procedures for new staff are thorough and staff are well qualified.
- 5.9 Links with parents are excellent. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents indicated their very strong satisfaction with the education and care that the school provides for their children. They also appreciate the quality of communication with the school. An overwhelming majority of parents felt that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. A very few parents did not feel that this is the case; inspectors could find no evidence to support this view. The great care taken by staff to meet the needs of pupils who have specific medical requirements was also seen as a strength of the school, as is the fact that the senior leaders teach all classes.
- 5.10 Parents speak highly of the 'home from home' atmosphere that is fostered by the school. They value the fact that staff know their children extremely well, facilitated by the small size of the school. Great importance is placed on ensuring that any issues or concerns are dealt with promptly, in accordance with the school's published procedure. The school has a suitable complaints procedure.
- 5.11 Partnerships with parents are fostered by the school at an early stage, in accordance with its aims. The telephone calls to new parents help to allay any first-day concerns and to build positive relationships. As required, parents of current and prospective pupils are now provided with the required information about the school. Plentiful information about school life includes regular newsletters and booklets, as well as a well-maintained website. Numerous opportunities are available for parents to become involved in school life, such as by attending assemblies or concerts, or volunteering to run the school library. Regular informative reports are sent to parents on their children's progress. In addition twice-yearly formal parents' meetings, along with the school's 'open door' policy, facilitate excellent contact in person between parents and staff.
- 5.12 An active parents' association supports the school and organises a wide range of events for both pupils and parents. Additionally, class representatives help new members of the school community to integrate and make friends, contributing to the family ethos of the school.

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