



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**ALLEYN COURT PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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## Alleyn Court Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Alleyn Court Preparatory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>882/6002</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY394379 &amp; EY394029</b>		
Address	<b>Alleyn Court Preparatory School Wakering Road Southend-on-Sea Essex SS3 0PW</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01702 582553</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01702 584574</b>		
Email Address	<b>office@alleyn-court.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Gareth Davies</b>		
Chair of Directors	<b>Mr William Wilcox</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>311</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (175 boys; 136 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>20</b>	5-11: <b>210</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>81</b>	11-18: <b>0</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>311</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Deborah Lewington</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>20 Jan 2015 to 23 Jan 2015</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 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 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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 parents, senior members of staff and with the chair of the board of directors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Jane Chesterfield	Reporting Inspector
Miss Merinda D'Aprano	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Clive Holder	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Adrian Lowe-Wheeler	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Frances Willacy	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Miss Jackie Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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

- 1.1 Alley Court School is a day school for boys and girls situated on two sites in Southend-on-Sea and Westcliff-on-Sea. It was founded as a school for boys in Westcliff in 1904 by the family who remain its proprietors. The school moved to its current main site in Thorpe Bay in 1993, when it became co-educational; an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting remains at the original site.
- 1.2 The school aims to deliver an excellent all-round education, promoting children's personal, social, physical and academic development, instilling confidence and preparing them for secondary education; to promote a love of learning in a happy, caring, purposeful environment where children are respectful in their relationships and positive about their achievements and aspirations; and to help pupils to develop lively and enquiring minds.
- 1.3 The school educates pupils aged from two to eleven years on its main site, and from two to five years on the second site, offering provision in its EYFS Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception classes on both sites. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the senior leadership team. A new head of pre-prep and a new bursar have been appointed, and two deputy heads posts now exist, one with academic and the other with pastoral responsibility. The accommodation at the Westcliff site has been fully refurbished following flood damage.
- 1.4 Currently there are 311 pupils on roll, of whom 101 are in the EYFS provision. Results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is slightly above the national average, with most pupils having ability that is in line with or above the national average. Pupils come from mainly professional or business backgrounds, and a small proportion is from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian.
- 1.5 Twenty-one pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), and four receive support for this. Thirty-six pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and thirty-two receive specialist support from the school. One pupil currently has an education and health care (EHC) 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 Alley Court School is highly successful in meeting its aims. The pupils' achievement is excellent, both in academic work and activities, and they attain high standards, making excellent progress as they move through the school. They make an excellent start in the EYFS and develop a love of learning which stays with them throughout their time at the school. Achievement in writing in the EYFS is lower than in the other areas of learning. Pupils of all ages enjoy an excellent range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences which enables them to discover a rich array of talents and interests. They benefit from excellent teaching by a well-qualified and experienced staff who are specialists in their subjects and motivate pupils with their own enthusiasm. Staff in the EYFS are skilled in following and building on children's interests, and in fostering their natural curiosity.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school. They are confident and self-aware, yet considerate of others around them, and mindful of others' needs. Pupils show a clear understanding, appropriate to their age, of fundamental British values. They have a sense of how to live in an orderly community, and of the need to obey rules. Pupils respect others and their different beliefs and views. In the EYFS, children are settled and secure, and interested in other people. Throughout the school, pastoral care is excellent, founded on excellent relationships and a family atmosphere which prevails on both sites. Systems for monitoring the well-being of pupils of all ages are highly effective. Attention given to welfare, health and safety is good. Some gaps in personnel record-keeping were drawn to the school's attention during the inspection and were addressed satisfactorily.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. The proprietors are very supportive of the school and its staff and involved in its daily life. The recommendations of previous inspections have been met. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Leaders at all levels share a common vision and sense of purpose, and inspire team spirit and commitment amongst the staff. In the EYFS, leaders ensure that there is continuity and consistency in provision and outcomes across both sites. Parents throughout the school are exceptionally pleased with the education provided and with what the school offers their children. They feel welcomed, involved and well-informed.

### **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. Establish robust procedures for record keeping in personnel files.
  2. In the EYFS, include a greater range of resources both indoors and outside that encourage more children to write for a purpose in their play.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is highly successful in its aims to help pupils to develop lively and enquiring minds and appreciate the importance of hard work and endeavour. Pupils of all ages listen with enthusiasm and speak with confidence in class. They read readily and with enjoyment, and write fluently and interestingly in different ways. They are able to apply their literacy skills easily across the curriculum. Younger pupils wrote happily and successfully about Boudicca's revolt in the style of a newspaper report. Pupils acquire secure skills in mathematics and in information and communication technology (ICT). They show the ability to think for themselves and express their views clearly in response to questions and in class discussions.
- 3.3 Pupils demonstrate particular strengths in the creative and performing arts, and in sports, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Artwork, drama and musical performance are all of a very high standard. There has been a significant improvement in musical achievement since the previous inspection which meets the recommendation of that visit. In response to an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities, pupils find areas in which they can excel, with the result that they are very successful across many fields. Sporting success, includes football, cricket, swimming, cross-country, table-tennis and archery at local, county and national levels.
- 3.4 Pupils who are more able, or who have particular gifts and talents, are encouraged and challenged so that they achieve highly. Those who have SEND or EAL are quickly identified and effectively supported in class and in withdrawal sessions. As a result, they are able to make similar degrees of progress to their classmates from their individual starting points.
- 3.5 The attainment of pupils cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available from the work in their books and in lessons, and the school's standardised data on their performance, it is judged to be well above national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, represents excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils have a consistently high level of success in gaining places at highly selective senior schools when they leave the school at the age of eleven. Most transfer to the schools of their choice.
- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Younger pupils frequently demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for what they are doing, and bring liveliness and energy to their activities. They are developing strong collaborative and team-working skills, in accordance with the school's development priorities. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, they have acquired a mature and sensible work ethic, and they apply themselves to their tasks with the minimum of fuss and considerable application. They have highly developed study skills to take with them to the next stage in their education.



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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The extensive curriculum meets the aims of the school. Planning, which reflects National Curriculum provision in an enhanced manner, is completed thoroughly. It meets the needs of all ages and abilities, with different tasks highlighted for all pupils. All are offered an appropriate level of challenge, and expectations are made clear.
- 3.9 The curriculum is highly effective in its coverage of required areas of learning, and the extra-curricular programme enhances this, offering an excellent range and breadth of experiences to pupils. Pupils appreciate this and, with their parents, feel that they are challenged strongly. They feel there is plenty of personal choice. The weakness in provision for music identified at the time of the previous inspection has been remedied through the provision of a designated room, although this is not large enough to be an effective rehearsal space for all groups and ensembles.
- 3.10 Curriculum plans promote the development of subject-specific skills as well as the content of teaching. Well-balanced timetables offer pupils much to interest and excite them, so that pupils are enabled to develop as confident, enquiring, risk-taking learners. High academic standards are promoted by detailed planning which ensures progression. This accelerates the pupils' progress to enable them to meet the demands of selective secondary school entrance examinations early in Year 6. The breadth of the curriculum is enhanced by provision of enrichment weeks, and subjects such as life skills and French throughout the school with the addition of Spanish for older pupils.
- 3.11 Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is embedded in the curriculum and actively promotes British values, such as democracy. Pupils are made well aware of themes of tolerance, kindness and the prevention of bullying which are important to the life of the school.
- 3.12 The wide range of extra-curricular activities includes a range of competitive and collaborative activities, individual and team sports, drama, ballet, art, chess and musical activities. Activities are offered to pupils of all abilities, with the twin goals of enjoyment and breadth of experience. Provision for very able pupils, or those with particular talents, is achieved through external competition in sport, art and choral singing, and there is considerable success in these at local, regional and national level, particularly in art and sport.
- 3.13 Charitable work is undertaken regularly for local and national causes, and pupils are generous in raising funds and organising activities for particular campaigns, or during the charities week. Community links are well established, for example pupils meet local civic leaders.

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

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Teaching supports the aims of the school. Planning strongly promotes progress, which is enhanced by consideration of each individual pupil's needs. Specialist teaching in several subjects and activities enhances the knowledge and expertise available to pupils. Pupils confirm that they are confident in their teachers' abilities to provide what is needed for their progress and well-being.
- 3.16 Marking is consistently good and for older pupils has an element of written dialogue between teacher and pupil which enables them to understand how to improve. This represents notable improvement and meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. Highly-developed strategies, such as using coloured pens for self-evaluation to marking, allow older pupils to evaluate their own progress. In this way pupils take responsibility for improving their own work, and develop maturity and responsibility for their learning. This is reflected in independence and lays firm foundations for future development. Assessment of the pupils' progress is systematic. The progress of pupils of all abilities is tracked using a computerised system, and informs future planning and teaching methods.
- 3.17 Teaching employs methods that use resources well, and shows excellent subject knowledge. The pace of lessons is brisk and purposeful, allowing pupils to make rapid progress. Almost all teaching demonstrates passion and enthusiasm for the subject, and engenders a mutual respect and trust that encourages pupils to do their best and to have the confidence to ask for help. Detailed planning promotes active learning, resulting in skills and knowledge that are applied across the curriculum. Pupils are challenged by the work provided and they are enabled to be comfortable with taking risks. The annual history fashion show, for example, promotes creative learning with cross-curricular links and team work between departments. Older pupils understand learning strategies that help their independence. Good behaviour is common because of clearly defined tasks that promote thinking, choice and discussion and synthesis of ideas.
- 3.18 The needs of more able pupils are met well through sophisticated questioning, effective grouping and tasks that offer appropriate challenge. Pupils who find work difficult receive necessary support and guidance. There is a good level of support given to pupils with SEND. This is easy for pupils to access, well-monitored and successful. Pupils with EAL have their needs planned for; there are no pupils currently at an early stage of learning English. The pupils themselves have great respect and affection for their teachers, and feel supported, encouraged and enabled to succeed.
- 3.19 Pupils with EHC plans are provided for appropriately. Communication about pupils' needs, plans, and strategies to support them in lessons is shared regularly by staff. Senior staff work together closely to ensure that additional needs are identified.

## **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 The school effectively achieves its aims to establish a happy family community where everyone feels a sense of purpose.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school provides a structure for pupils to explore and develop their understanding of the spiritual facets of their lives. The study of diverse religious practices in religious education enables pupils to develop an awareness of differences in both belief and faith. Pupils benefit from regular assemblies, PSHE, and activities such as circle time and life skills where they discuss beliefs and ideas with perception and insight. Pupils express their spiritual appreciation and enjoyment in the creative subjects such as art, drama and music where they are able to recognise their own and others' special gifts and talents. Registration and form time every morning is used very effectively to discuss a range of topics in a reflective manner. This time is also used for reading and developing organisational skills.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. This is demonstrated in their care of fellow pupils and their conscientious service to the school in their roles of responsibility as prefects, captains and monitors. They are confident and astute school ambassadors. They organise themselves efficiently when arranging charitable initiatives and events in support of people and communities that are less fortunate than themselves. Harvest festival produce is donated to local charities which support the homeless and families in difficulties. Pupils have also supported a Christmas jumper day in aid of a national children's charity. The school has enrolled in a national initiative to promote healthy lifestyles in schools, with the pupils' support, to achieve healthy eating and positive social interaction.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development and awareness are excellent. Pupils show mutual respect for one another in the way they play co-operatively and support others. They accept and enjoy the responsibilities they are given. They show pride in being chosen for a leadership role and carry out their duties conscientiously. Older pupils read to younger ones regularly. They have a strong sense of community and enjoy working hard and receiving house points. They demonstrate a commitment to upholding traditional British values of democracy and respect for others, for example by voting for school council members. They enjoy the benefits of visiting local and national institutions such as the local post office in Year 1 and the science museum in Year 6.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural understanding is excellent. Guest speakers at assemblies, including local leaders, enhance the cultural experiences of the pupils. Pupils gain a comprehensive insight into Western cultural traditions, performing plays and music from contemporary and historical sources. They celebrate religious festivals at Christmas and Easter and show empathy with events such as at the annual Remembrance service. The Year 6 pupils also visit the National Holocaust Centre each year to see an age appropriate exhibition. This encourages tolerance and understanding of the differences between cultures within the local community and globally.

- 4.7 The self-esteem of pupils is high because they are valued as individuals. By the time they leave the school, the pupils' personal development is at a high level and they are well prepared for the move to their future schools.

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

- 4.8 The pastoral care of pupils is excellent.
- 4.9 The school successfully achieves its aim to provide a stimulating learning platform within an environment of compassion and care. Teachers know the pupils well and work consistently to encourage them to achieve excellent personal growth. The pupils' well-being is closely monitored by their form teachers or tutors, and any concerns are quickly acknowledged and shared at staff meetings. Relationships throughout the school are of a high quality. Staff and pupils get on exceptionally well together, and pupils are highly supportive of one another.
- 4.10 Pupils understand the need to maintain routines that sustain their well-being through healthy eating habits and regular physical exercise. The school provides wholesome and nutritious meals and the extensive games and activities programme affords excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of physical activities.
- 4.11 The system of rewards and sanctions has recently been modified and is clear, and understood by all pupils. There are a variety of opportunities at assemblies and house meetings for achievements and positive citizenship to be celebrated. Senior staff members follow policies and procedures closely to prevent inappropriate social interaction. The school has suitable measures to guard against bullying. Scrutiny of the school's records shows that any cases of bullying are constructively followed up and communicated at full staff meetings. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of pupils strongly agreed that rewards are fair and that cases of bullying are dealt with well. A small minority of pupils stated that they are unhappy with the way sanctions are given. On investigation, inspectors found that this was due to the fact that a number of younger pupils were unclear about the meaning of the word 'sanction'. There is no unfairness in the way behaviour is managed.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to provide educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 Pupils have numerous forums in which to express their views. The school council representatives discuss topics of relevance to pupil welfare and report back to their classes. The house system encourages co-operation between older and younger pupils while introducing a level of healthy competitiveness.

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

- 4.14 The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 The school is methodical in its efforts to ensure the safety of the pupils. The requirements of statutory guidance for the safeguarding of pupils, including the safe recruitment of staff, were fully met by the end of the inspection. Some gaps in record keeping in personnel files were pointed out to the school during the inspection and promptly addressed.
- 4.16 The provision for pupils who are ill, including any with SEND, is appropriate. Medicines are properly stored, dispensed and recorded. Staff members are trained in first aid and a suitable medical room is provided.

- 4.17 The health and safety committee carries out systematic site surveys of the buildings and grounds, and necessary safety actions and improvements are implemented. Accident and incident records also provide data for discussion at health and safety meetings. Risk assessments for all areas of the school, including educational outings, are well documented and current. Careful measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards are in place and fire drill records are comprehensive. Fire drills are held regularly. Tests of equipment are carried out regularly and any required action undertaken promptly. Break times are correctly supervised and the pupils enjoy the use of the grounds and sports fields wherever possible.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored securely for the required period of time.

## **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 school's proprietors have a detailed insight into, and overview of, all areas of its work. This is enabled by their practical involvement in its daily life and management. Directors of the school teach classes and lead clubs, and are present on the safeguarding and the health and safety committees. This means that they have first-hand experience of the daily running of the school. As a result, they are able to effectively discharge their responsibilities for standards, financial planning, and investment in the school. The proprietors ensure that money is spent wisely and that the school is well resourced, enabling it to offer a full and rich range of subjects and activities, taught by well-qualified and experienced staff.
- 5.3 Through their presence on the senior leadership team, the directors are instrumental in school development and improvement planning. They support and challenge other leaders and help the school to move forward. The imminent change of status in governance, from proprietorship to a charitable trust, has been carefully prepared for and planned. The members of the new board of trustees have been selected to offer a broad range of skills and expertise to help the school grow. The proprietors meet the requirement to review safeguarding and child protection procedures throughout the school annually. They ensure that the school fulfils its obligations under other legislation and monitor areas such as health and safety effectively.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.5 The school's leaders ensure that all staff, including those in administrative and support roles, are highly effective in fulfilling the aims of the school. At all levels of management, staff understand their particular responsibilities and successfully oversee the implementation of all policies and procedures necessary to ensure the safeguarding of pupils. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Following a thorough induction process, new staff quickly become part of a friendly, supportive and dedicated team. Strong, consultative and caring leadership at all levels, is reflected in a strong sense of direction in the school's educational provision. This promotes excellent teaching, and the high standard of the pupils' achievement and personal development.
- 5.6 Changes to senior management since the previous full inspection have been very successful. The role of subject leaders has been strengthened, providing middle managers with clearly defined and understood responsibilities for both curriculum and pastoral matters, which they fulfil with skill, dedication and enthusiasm. The school has responded well to the recommendations in the previous inspection report. Teamwork and mutual support are outstanding and demonstrate clearly the family-friendly ethos which underpins the strong leadership of the school.
- 5.7 The high quality of analysis of the school's self-evaluation highlights clearly what needs to be done and planning sets out a framework for development with clear

targets for moving forward. Constant monitoring of development plans is undertaken through consultation with pupils, parents and staff. The school recruits and trains high quality staff. Professional development is at the heart of all that the school does and regular training sessions inform staff of new initiatives, changes to the curriculum and e-safety.

- 5.8 The school maintains a strong commitment to effective links with parents, carers and guardians. Recent improvements have included a greater use of electronic communication, a more informative website, the creation of a parent portal, a parent forum, weekly newsletters, an annual calendar and more regular reports to parents.
- 5.9 The robust links which exist in the EYFS enable stable relationships to develop between home and school and these are maintained as pupils progress through the school. The parent forum meets with the headmaster regularly and outcomes are fed back to the parent body via class representatives. Informal opportunities, such as the weekly coffee morning for parents, provide a chance to meet senior staff and to air any queries or concerns. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly supportive of the education provided by the school.
- 5.10 Concerns of parents are handled meticulously and the close links with parents ensure that most difficulties are resolved informally and quickly through the robust procedures in place. The complaints policy is suitable and readily available to parents. The efficient and courteous school office answers parents' queries with consideration and due attention. Complaints are appropriately managed according to the school's procedures.
- 5.11 Communication with parents is excellent. All parents of pupils up to Reception have the chance to have daily contact with staff at drop-off, and at collection times up to Year 3. There is the opportunity of two-way written communication through the reading diary and the homework planner. Parents are encouraged to take a full part in the education of their child and some help by listening to readers, or by sharing their professional or vocational expertise. Published menus are greatly appreciated by parents when planning meals at home. Throughout the school, parents value highly the open-door policy that allows consultation at any time and which is a strength of the school.
- 5.12 Parents enjoy receiving literature which describes the many activities which take place. Parents attend a variety of functions. The thriving parent-teacher association organise both fundraising and social events, such as the firework party and the summer ball. Substantial sums of money are raised, contributing to the redevelopment of a sports pavilion as well as the purchase of an outdoor classroom and climbing frame for younger children.
- 5.13 A detailed website, school prospectus and parent handbook provide all current and prospective parents with all the required information about the school. This information is supplemented by taster visits.
- 5.14 The school provides detailed written reports which give a clear picture of a child's progress and also guidance on next steps. There are also regular consultations between parents and staff at formal parent evenings throughout the year.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 6.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. A range of teaching methods are successfully combined to create stimulating and exciting educational programmes across all areas of learning. These capture the children's interest, and offer suitable challenge across the age range. The recommendation of the previous EYFS inspection report to extend children's opportunities to develop their mathematical awareness has been met. Plentiful opportunities now exist for children to develop their mathematical skills, with a variety of resources available alongside frequent reinforcement of numbers in everyday activities.
- 6.2 Knowledgeable staff demonstrate a clear understanding of how children learn, and as such, support the children's learning and development extremely well. For example, by introducing boxes into the role play area, they encourage children to explore. Older children adapt these imaginatively to create 'disco machines' and 'cars'. Younger children are provided with appropriate stimuli to encourage investigation, which they are keen to undertake. They lead their own experiments; for instance, by deciding to pour warm water onto ice blocks in order to melt them faster. Staff have high expectations, and get the very best out of the children in their care.
- 6.3 Ongoing assessments of individual children's progress are used to tailor learning experiences to meet their needs. Staff recognise the importance of listening to children, and involve them in planning for future learning. As a result, all children, including those with EAL and SEND have their needs met extremely well. Strong specialist support is provided for those children who require it, and more able children are presented with appropriate challenge. Staff value the excellent relationships that they have with parents. Highly successful partnerships exist between home and school. Parents play a full role in their child's learning. Information for parents is plentiful, and staff are keen to impart their knowledge to help parents continue their child's learning at home. Channels for communication are plentiful. There are regular opportunities for parents to discuss the progress of their child. Written reports and ongoing learning journals provide valuable information. Parents voiced great satisfaction with all aspects of the provision in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and in person.

### **6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being**

- 6.4 Provision for the children's well-being is outstanding. Class teachers fulfil their roles as key people extremely well, and are ably supported by well qualified assistants. Relationships between children and staff are strong, and this results in happy and self-confident children. On both sites, staff are successful in creating a welcoming, well-resourced and secure environment in which children quickly settle and enjoy exploring the range of activities on offer. Staff listen and respond to children thoughtfully. Consequently, children are confident to engage in discussions, and interact well with both adults and their friends.



- 6.5 A consistent approach is taken to managing behaviour, and children are clear in the expectations that staff set. As a result, children are polite and respectful to one another. For example, older children use 'please' and 'thank you' spontaneously at lunch time. Care arrangements are embedded well across the EYFS. Routines are understood by children, who demonstrate a growing independence. They take responsibility for their own personal care needs as they progress through the EYFS. Even the youngest children proudly explain that they have washed their hands, and helped put away bedding after rest time. Healthy lifestyles are successfully promoted from an early age. Physical activity is encouraged, and there are many opportunities for children to participate in sport, as well as outdoor play. Children take responsibility for making their own healthy food choices, and serve themselves at snack and mealtimes. This fulfils the recommendation made by the previous inspection.
- 6.6 Staff diligently help children understand about safety; for example they involve older children in assessing risk, and show younger children how to carry a chair safely. Comprehensive arrangements are in place to ensure that children have a seamless transition to the next stage of their education, be it between classes, or different sites. The setting has also developed highly effective systems for the sharing of information with other settings where a child attends more than one, which was a recommendation of the previous inspection.

### **6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision**

- 6.7 Leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. The proprietorial governance takes great interest in the provision and is aware of its responsibilities. The setting benefits from strong leadership and an excellent management structure that enables the two sites to have a consistent approach in every aspect of their practice. Leaders are well supported by a committed staff team who are clear in their roles and responsibilities. Policies and practices are well thought out and followed meticulously. Systems to implement arrangements for the curriculum, assessment, and care practices are rigorous and ensure that standards are maintained.
- 6.8 Staff supervision is good, with regular meetings taking place. Since the previous inspection these meetings have been developed; reflective evaluations of practice are undertaken, and the children's learning experiences are enriched through this process. Appraisal and subsequent professional development is effective. Staff regularly attend courses to embrace new initiatives. Self-evaluation and development planning are reflective and drive ongoing improvement.
- 6.9 The safeguarding of children is given the highest priority. Thorough risk assessments and procedures are in place to help keep children safe from harm, and all necessary checks have been undertaken on staff. Staff have received training in child protection, and health and safety, and there are ample numbers of trained paediatric first aiders. Excellent links have been established between staff, parents and external agencies. This helps provide the very best support for children who require additional input.

### **6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 6.10 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. All children, including those with SEND and EAL make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points. By the end of the EYFS the majority of children meet the expected levels of development, with some children exceeding these expectations.
- 6.11 Children clearly enjoy learning and are keen to share their experiences. They engage in imaginative play extremely successfully and often sustain interest for long periods. Younger children enjoy mark making and are acquiring good pre-reading skills. Older children demonstrate a growing knowledge of sounds and words. They are developing independent writing skills, with some children writing sentences. Many children enjoy writing for a range of purposes in their play, although fewer resources are provided to attract children who are less likely to choose writing activities for themselves. Mathematical skills are developed well over time, and are made meaningful due to being used in everyday activities. For instance, younger children record and count how many dogs they saw on the way to school, and older children enjoy the challenge of addition questions. Children of all ages demonstrate confidence with a range of ICT resources, including computers and cameras.
- 6.12 Children demonstrate excellent personal development. They happily engage in play with their friends, and demonstrate independence from an early age. Children's behaviour is extremely good. They show kindness to one another, and take turns well, for example at lunch time when children serve themselves. Children are comfortable in their surroundings, and demonstrate that they feel secure whilst at school.
- 6.13 All requirements for safeguarding and welfare are successfully met. Staff work hard to ensure that these are meticulously implemented. Since the previous inspections, staff have successfully addressed all of the recommendations. The development plan illustrates a desire for continuous improvement, and there is a shared desire to offer children the very best start to their school career.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.14 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

**Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.**