



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ALTRINCHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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## Altrincham Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Altrincham Preparatory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>358/6002</b>		
Address	<b>Marlborough Road Bowdon Altrincham Cheshire WA14 2RR England</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>0161 9283366</b>		
Email Address	<b>admin@altprep.co.uk</b>		
Head Master	<b>Mr Andrew Potts</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Andrew Hill</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>342</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>15</b>	5-11: <b>261</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>66</b>	11-18: <b>0</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>342</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Sara Makepeace-Taylor</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>09 to 12 Feb 2016</b>		

## PREFACE

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](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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI standard inspection was in February 2010. 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 children aged under two), 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 chairman 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 Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Day	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Thomas Mylne	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kia Jackson	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11

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

- 1.1 Founded in 1936, Altrincham Preparatory School educates boys between the ages of 2 and 11. It is administered by a limited company, with seven director-governors who are the major shareholders. The school is on two sites. Marlborough Road is for pupils from Years 3 to 6; it consists of purpose-build accommodation beside its own playing field, set in the residential suburbs of Altrincham. Highbury, the original school building, is about a mile away and accommodates Years 1 and 2. Since the previous inspection, the school has acquired Bank Place, a building next door to Highbury which used to house another preparatory school, and it has been redeveloped as the EYFS centre, for the Nursery, pre-school and Reception year groups.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 342 pupils in the school. Of these, 81 were in the EYFS, 85 were in Years 1 and 2, and 176 were in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils remain at the school until the age of eleven, when they take entrance examinations to a range of local grammar and independent senior schools. The overall ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.3 No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist learning support from the school, and the nine pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) receive support for their English. About two thirds of the pupils are white British while a third come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide a safe, happy and stimulating environment in which pupils can enjoy their schooling and develop their individual potential, following a broad, balanced curriculum. The school states that it encourages the pupils to develop self-discipline, self-confidence and self-esteem, and to foster an awareness of others. It also seeks to promote high moral standards and to establish good links between school and home.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 In fulfilment of its stated aims, the school is successful in achieving overall excellence in its educational provision at all stages, including the EYFS. The pupils' positive approach to their studies and teaching of high quality are reflected in good and often rapid progress and significant academic achievement, culminating in success in entrance examinations to senior schools. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge and understanding of their work. The excellent teaching is supported by regular, helpful marking and effective monitoring of progress, with remedial action taken when necessary. Pupils with SEND and EAL are very well catered for, as are the more able. Pupils attain a conspicuously high standard in sport, music and art. The high number of trophies won reflects the many successes, notably in sport, achieved in local, regional and national competitions. The broad overall provision enriches the pupils' educational and personal experience, enabling them to develop their talents happily and fruitfully.
- 2.2 The school achieves high standards in all that it undertakes, with pastoral care at the heart of its mission. It successfully meets its aim to provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment. The caring and supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. Pupils conduct themselves very well and their behaviour in class is exemplary. The quality of the pupils' personal development owes much to the 'family' atmosphere of this close community, in which pupils are very well known to the staff, who respond readily to their needs and interests. Proud of their school, the pupils grow strongly in self-confidence and self-esteem, and when they come to leave they are well prepared for the next chapter in their lives and education.
- 2.3 The successful realisation of the school's aims is a strong testimony to its dedicated governance, leadership and management. The devotion of the governors to the school is wholehearted and they take a lively interest in all aspects of its life. Leadership combines calmness and care with energy and ambition. Close attention to detail characterises the efficient and effective day-to-day management of the school. The academic and support staff are devoted to the well-being of the pupils and the good of the school as a whole. They receive the required training in safeguarding and child protection. Governors and leadership have not, however, exercised proper oversight of the single central register of appointments, where significant failings date back over a number of years. The school has successfully met the recommendations of the previous inspection report, by sharing good classroom practice and by making better use of the time available in the working day. The potential of the library and the playgrounds for learning and play respectively is not fully realised, and in the EYFS, there is scope for making the monitoring and recording of children's progress and attainment be more efficient. The school enjoys excellent relations with the parents, almost all of whom say that they would recommend it to another parent.

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

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

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to take the following action:

- ensure that any staff awaiting an enhanced criminal records check are appropriately supervised until it is received, and that the previous employment history and references are received before a person appointed starts work [Part 3, paragraph 7.(a) and (b)];
- ensure that all staff have a barred list check before taking up their appointment and that a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order. [Part 4, paragraphs 18.(2)(a) and (b); 18.(3) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];
- ensure that all required entries in the single central register of appointments is completed in a timely manner [Part 4, paragraph 21 under Single Central Register of Appointments];
- ensure that those having leadership responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently [Part 8, paragraph 34.(1)(a)(b) under Quality of leadership and management].

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

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the school's libraries are used more effectively to support learning.
2. Improve the range of playground equipment on both sites.
3. In the EYFS, improve systems for monitoring and recording the attainment and progress of the children.



### **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 quality of the pupil's achievement and learning in the EYFS is excellent. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning, especially outdoors. They relish a challenge and are keen to discuss their ideas. Many of the children read well when they are in Nursery, and in Reception they can write a simple sentence with finger spaces and full stops, with some of them writing independently. In Nursery, children can hold up the correct number of fingers for 'three' and in Reception many can count to 100 in tens and in hundreds to 1,000. Children know the names of 2-D and 3-D shapes, and know that 3-D shapes have faces, vertices and edges. When playing football in the playground, the children display excellent ball skills. The children enjoy trying to find reasons for things such as why snowdrops are called snowdrops. In Reception they are keen to discuss deeper questions such as the nature of God and creation. All make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, including those with SEND and EAL.
- 3.3 The EYFS children take pleasure in being very active learners. They are keen to explore their environment and to investigate where worms disappear to. They enjoy creating and developing ideas for imaginative games together, and take advantage of the wide spaces available to them to act these out. Children of all ages choose independently, and enjoy getting out and setting up the toy of their choice, such as the train tracks.
- 3.4 At every stage thereafter, the school fulfils its aim that pupils should develop their potential. Standards of logical thought and application of mathematics are high, as are those of literacy, articulacy and proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT). Levels of achievement in French, music and art are also high. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge and understanding of the material being covered in their lessons. Almost all of the Year 6 leavers proceed to their first-choice senior schools, many moving to schools with demanding entrance requirements.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for 2012 to 2014: these are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in standardised tests of attainment indicate that pupils' performance in English and mathematics is higher than national norms. Standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, with some age groups making progress that is excellent. Evidence from the inspection, which includes scrutiny of written work, lesson observations and interviews with pupils, supports this judgement. All of the pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that they were making good academic progress.
- 3.6 As a result of the school's provision, the more able pupils and those with SEND and EAL make good and often rapid progress relative to their abilities, achieving success in senior school entrance examinations. Pupils with EAL and SEND equally earn headmaster's commendations and other school awards.
- 3.7 The school performs extremely strongly in sport, notably football, hockey, rugby, cross country, cricket and tennis, with teams regularly achieving success in local, regional and national competitions. In the week of the inspection, the hockey team

qualified for the finals of a national tournament. Another area of strength is choral singing, and accomplished performances were heard during the inspection, ranging from choirs to the whole school. In addition, pupils produce excellent artwork, and are successful in national speech and drama examinations.

- 3.8 Throughout the school, the pupils display an excellent attitude to learning. They apply themselves to their studies with evident enthusiasm, keen to do well and eager to be challenged. They respond readily in lessons, offering answers and opinions confidently and articulately. They work conscientiously, displaying perseverance and determination. When working in groups, they co-operate very well. The presentation of work in their exercise books reflects great pride and care. Excellent academic and artwork, much of it interactive, is displayed on classroom and corridor walls. In their responses to the questionnaire, the pupils unanimously affirmed that they are encouraged to work independently and to do things for themselves, and this was borne out during the inspection. Pupils participate in extra-curricular activities in a similarly spirited and ambitious way.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The EYFS curriculum is enriched by high-quality specialist teaching in French, physical education, music, yoga and drama. Teachers of these subjects report back to the class teacher and their observations contribute to the children's learning profiles, meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.11 In the EYFS, almost all of the children reach at least the expected levels of development and the very few who have not done so in all areas are quickly identified and given the help and support they need in order to be ready for the next stage of their education. All children exceed the expected levels in some areas, with the majority of the children exceeding expectations in all areas.
- 3.12 From Years 1 to 6, pupils follow a curriculum which covers all the requisite areas of learning and is suitable for all ages and abilities. Broad and balanced, the curriculum fully supports the school's aims and equips pupils with the skills and attributes to thrive in later life.
- 3.13 The deployment of specialist teachers and the use of setting by ability in teaching of the core subjects of mathematics and English contribute to the pupils' excellent progress. The creative subjects of music, drama, art, and design and technology are all strongly represented within the curriculum. All pupils learn French. The school also makes excellent provision for physical activities. The pupils' ICT skills are developed in discrete lessons and effectively used across the curriculum. The curriculum is also enriched by a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) which actively promotes a knowledge and understanding of British values and provides a sound introduction to economic education. In their responses to the questionnaires, parents unanimously expressed satisfaction with the range of subjects and areas of experience covered in the curriculum. By providing well-focused activities in the middle of the morning, including the excellent reading period, the school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection report that it should make better use of curriculum time. Coverage of political issues always incorporates a balanced presentation of opposing views.

- 3.14 Provision for the most able pupils and those with SEND and EAL is excellent, and is highly effective in meeting their needs. Dedicated learning support staff develop strong links with classroom teachers with the result that detailed education plans with clear targets are effectively implemented. These are regularly reviewed in consultation with the appropriate staff.
- 3.15 At lunchtimes, pupils may make use of the library, where there is a range of both fiction and non-fiction books. Some books in the junior library, however, are outdated and they are not attractively presented. The room lacks comfortable seating and its potential as a learning resource is not fully realised.
- 3.16 Extra-curricular provision is excellent, generating particularly strong participation in sport and music. A full programme of fixtures enables all pupils of all abilities to represent the school frequently and in a variety of sports. Choral groups give all pupils the opportunity to perform in public and they regularly take part in local festivals, as do instrumental musicians. All pupils responding to the inspection questionnaire valued the excellent array of extra-curricular clubs, ranging from Spanish to philosophy and programming to strategy games, in which they participate with enthusiasm.
- 3.17 Various outings take pupils to places of educational and cultural interest, which enrich their learning and experience. Recent visits have included trips to local air raid shelters, a museum of glass and different places of worship. Residential trips help to develop the older pupils' independence. The Year 6 French curriculum is tailored to support that year group's annual visit to a château in France.
- 3.18 The pupils benefit from excellent links with the community. In their support of a local food bank they come to appreciate people in less fortunate circumstances. Pupils also raise money for schools in Goa with which constructive links have been established, allowing pupils interaction with children of a different culture.

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

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.20 Staff in the EYFS have extremely high expectations of the children in all areas, and they delight in encouraging the children's learning to the highest level. Meticulous planning and thorough analysis of assessments help staff tailor activities to target the next steps in each child's learning. Teachers' excellent knowledge of each child helps them to engage them so that they learn effectively. High-quality resources and an excellent range of teaching strategies and activities help all children to make substantial progress.
- 3.21 Teaching in Years 1 to 6 demonstrates a high level of subject knowledge, which is shared enthusiastically with the well-motivated pupils. Thoroughly planned, briskly paced lessons enable pupils to make excellent progress. Teachers' very positive manner encourages the pupils to give of their best at all times, and frequent praise promotes high levels of application. Much teaching generates a genuine sense of enjoyment in pupils, who find their lessons both stimulating and rewarding. Interviews with pupils confirm the strong rapport they have with their teachers and this was frequently observed during the inspection. All pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that teachers made sure they had the right amount of work to do and gave them individual help when they needed it. Teachers have a clear understanding of the standards that pupils need to reach in order to gain places at their chosen senior schools, and they successfully meet these needs.

- 3.22 Throughout the school, teachers know their pupils extremely well, and consistently take their individual needs and abilities into account. The school provides a supportive learning environment in which pupils with SEND are given appropriate tasks to ensure that they make rapid progress commensurate with their abilities. Following early screening and diagnosis, pupils with SEND benefit from systematic specialist help, either singly or in small groups; close liaison between the learning support department and form teachers ensures continuity of focused attention. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils have a firm grasp of previous topics before assimilating new concepts, and consequently academic progression is built on firm foundations. Pupils with EAL are well supported with their English, both in lessons and through extra specialist help. The effective deployment of teaching assistants ensures that additional help is provided to those pupils who require it. Lessons include extension work and challenging tasks for the more able pupils. Almost all parents confirm, in their responses to the questionnaire, that the needs of more able pupils are appropriately met.
- 3.23 Teaching uses a variety of methods. In paired and small-group sessions, pupils co-operate very well, displaying tolerance and respect for one another's views, which the teaching strongly promotes. A strength of the teaching is the frequency with which pupils have the opportunity to develop their own knowledge, understanding and skills through reviewing one another's work and exchanging ideas with their neighbours. A wide range of resources, including interactive boards, is effectively used. While lessons are carefully structured and directed, teaching nonetheless affords plenty of scope for discussion, in which pupils enthusiastically participate and which is always non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.
- 3.24 The thorough marking of work includes detailed positive comments, which highlight individual pupils' strengths while suggesting areas for development. Assessment of progress is in part carried out through effective questioning in lessons and the monitoring of the quality of pupils' written work through regular book audits. Teachers also track progress through twice-yearly standardised assessments: pupils not making the expected progress are helped to catch up with additional support.

## **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 are keen to make a positive contribution as class helpers and leaders. They work co-operatively, especially when manoeuvring and playing with large-wheeled vehicles. They share well and take turns, for instance when looking through a field magnifying glass at leaves and twigs in the garden. In a religious education lesson they demonstrated an appreciation of fundamental values in showing great respect and tolerance for the views of others when discussing the creation. In Nursery they were intrigued by the colour created when they mixed red and white paint. Children use the building housing Years 1 and 2 for some of their lessons and this, along with a planned programme of other activities there, helps prepare them for transition into the main school.
- 4.3 The pupils in Years 1 to 6 grow strongly in self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Proud of their school, they display emotional maturity and, as excellent ambassadors, they are eager to suggest reasons why they feel their school is special. Carefully crafted assemblies engender a respectful and empathetic view of their relationships with their peers. Pupils' appreciation of the non-material aspects of life is enriched by their experiences of music, art and poetry. Pupils feel valued as individuals, not only through the attention of their teachers but also through public celebrations of success and achievement.
- 4.4 Showing excellent moral awareness, the pupils have a clear appreciation of right and wrong, which is reinforced by the consistently applied systems governing behaviour. These extend across the age range. The pupils feel sure that misdemeanours will be addressed by the approachable and caring staff. A 'come and tell' attitude prevails at the school, where openness and honesty are celebrated.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent and they thrive in an atmosphere of increasingly age-specific responsibilities that extend across the fields of music, sport and class representation. Pupils are elected democratically to some of these roles and they work conscientiously for those whom they represent. Class debate linked to news events raises pupils' awareness of topical issues. This prepares them appropriately for life in a modern democratic society, as does their developing knowledge of the public institutions and services of England and their understanding of the rule of law and individual liberty. They benefit from the opportunities to work collectively in fund-raising for a variety of local and national charities. New pupils are welcomed into the school, and established systems enable them to integrate and rapidly feel at home.
- 4.6 The pupils' excellent cultural awareness is fostered in many ways. Vibrant temporary and permanent multi-faith displays are evident throughout the school, with themed food served to mark festivals. Parents of different faiths address the pupils, who benefit from a strong link with the local parish. Pupils of various religious and ethnic backgrounds work and play collaboratively together, and the carefully planned curriculum ensures that key features of differing cultures and communities are valued and tolerance developed. The link with Goa is well established and the pupils enjoy fund-raising and following the fortunes of contrasting schools.

4.7 Transitions throughout the school are carefully planned so that pupils gain increasing experience of the subsequent phase of learning. When they come to leave the school, pupils are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

4.9 All children in EYFS have a key person who keeps a caring eye on them and monitors their development. Excellent relationships between adults, and between adults and children, give children the security and confidence to behave well and treat others with care. Children in Nursery show empathy for others who are upset. Children benefit from the many opportunities to be physically active and gain excellent skills, such as ball skills. They are provided with healthy, nutritious, tasty meals and snacks and, even at the age of three, know that it is good to eat broccoli.

4.10 The highly successful arrangements for the pastoral care of pupils in Years 1 to 6 make a significant contribution to their personal development and meet the school's stated aim of providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment in which pupils can enjoy their schooling. The staff consistently provide a high level of support and guidance which allows the pupils to feel secure and supported in their school life. The pupils respond enthusiastically to the system of rewards, which recognises attitude and endeavour through a range of merit awards and incentives. The well-established house system ensures constructive and friendly relationships between different age groups, and pupils work towards common goals.

4.11 Relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding, with a high degree of mutual enjoyment within the lessons. Paired, group and whole-class discussion is skilfully managed and pupils move harmoniously from one to the other. The staff know their pupils well and make themselves available informally to both pupils and parents on a daily basis. All pupils confirm they know that they can go to a teacher as soon as they feel they have a concern.

4.12 Behaviour around the school is excellent. The pupils conduct themselves courteously and with consideration for others. Each class follows the common approach regulating incidents of poor behaviour as they accrue, and only in exceptional circumstances does a higher-level sanction apply, which the pupils say they find entirely fair. In their responses to the questionnaires, a very small minority of parents felt that the school does not deal well with bullying. The evidence of the inspection did not support this view: pupils stated that the exceedingly rare instances of bullying had been dealt with promptly and fairly, and this was corroborated by the written records. Throughout the school, pupils understand the consistently delivered message about their responsibilities with regard to cyber-bullying and they confidently explain what they should do in the event of such a concern.

4.13 The nutritious food contributes to a healthy lifestyle, alongside an extensive programme of exercise in games, clubs and play times.

4.14 A very small minority of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school did not ask for their opinions or respond to them. The evidence of the inspection, particularly interviews with pupils, did not support this view. Pupils feel they have a voice, that all members of the school community are approachable and that ideas will be listened to. The school council has been involved in decision-making for the playground improvements and has achieved the establishment of new clubs.

4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.

4.17 In their responses to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents agreed that their children feel safe at school and are well looked after, and this was borne out by the evidence of the inspection. Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of all pupils, including those in the EYFS, are taken very seriously. Highly effective, they cover all aspects of the life of the school, and they are overseen by the health and safety committee, which meets regularly and is chaired by a member of the governing body. The detailed minutes of the care management meetings demonstrate the high level of attention constantly paid by staff to the welfare, health and safety of individual pupils.

4.18 In the EYFS the arrangements prevent radicalisation and extremism. The children's prompt and regular attendance is promoted. With regard to the appointment of staff, however, the safeguarding of children in the EYFS and also the older pupils has not been assured. Although significant measures have been taken in recent months to remedy long-standing deficiencies in the single central register of appointments, there are still gaps. Members of staff have taken up their appointments before either their barred list checks or their enhanced criminal records checks have been received, and without systematic supervision in the meantime. By the time of the inspection, all of the required barred list checks and enhanced criminal records checks had been carried out. In some other respects, the appointment process has not complied with regulatory requirements. References had not always been received before a member of staff began to work at the school, and by the end of the inspection no references or previous employment histories had been received for two members of staff. Prohibition orders against new teachers had not been made before the teachers took up their appointments. All new members receive appropriate induction and all staff and volunteers are fully and regularly trained in safeguarding and child protection, including the importance of educating pupils to become resilient to the risks of radicalisation.

4.19 At levels appropriate to their age, pupils are educated in e-safety, including cyberbullying and the risks associated with social media. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. A fire consultant regularly undertakes risk assessments on all three sites. The school keeps detailed records of the maintenance of fire prevention and fire-fighting equipment. Fire practices, held every half term, are properly recorded. Risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough for relevant activities in and out of school. Suitable provision is made for pupils who are ill or injured, and for those with SEND, and governors receive reports of all accidents. Sixty-two members of staff are trained in emergency first aid, seven at the higher level. Staff in the EYFS are appropriately trained in paediatric first aid.

4.20 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored, with a system of immediate response to pupil absence.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body is wholeheartedly committed to the school's aims and ethos. The governors contribute a wide range of experience and expertise. They exercise effective oversight and conscientiously discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They sit on interview panels, monitor all financial matters very closely and take forward-thinking initiatives to promote the well-being of the school.
- 5.3 One area where governors have not exercised sufficient vigilance is in the monitoring of the single central register of appointments, where significant deficiencies date back over several years. The governors are diligent and effective in discharging their responsibilities for other aspects of child protection, welfare, health and safety: the governors ensure that an annual reviewed is carried out of safeguarding policies and practices and the efficiency with which the related duties are discharged. At a day-to-day level, the governors actively promote the well-being of the pupils, from the EYFS through to Year 6.
- 5.4 The governors give valued support and challenge to senior management, with whom they have frequent informal communication in addition to the annual schedule of formal meetings. Furthermore, every governor has a specific area of responsibility, which ensures close liaison with senior members of staff and a detailed understanding of a particular set of policies and practices. Governors are well known to the staff, from the most long-serving to the newest. A member of the board chairs the health and safety committee. Governors' board meetings take place in the EYFS building, reflecting the equality of attention given to all parts of the school. Regular attendance at events gives members of the board close insights into the day-to-day life of the school. Governors keep abreast of current good practice by attending training courses which cover defined areas of their duties and responsibilities.

### **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, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 Leadership and management in the EYFS are excellent at all levels. Notwithstanding the deficiencies in the procedures for the appointment of staff, children are extremely well looked after and their safeguarding is assured in a welcoming, safe and interesting environment. In this now integrated EYFS setting, staff have clear priorities for the future and an ambitious vision to provide the highest quality of education which engages children fully and happily in their learning, in accordance with the school's aims. Staff are reflective and there are good procedures for self-evaluation and continuing improvement. The educational programmes are monitored very effectively. Staff promote equality, diversity and the upholding of British values. Managers now have non-contact time to carry out their roles, thus meeting one of the recommendations of the previous inspection.



However, the continuing use of paper-based recording systems is time consuming, and also less immediate for parents than an online electronic system.

- 5.7 EYFS staff have an effective good system of regular supervision which focuses on the needs of the children in their care. Encouraged to develop their professionalism staff are supported to gain additional and further qualifications, some at degree level. The setting has made excellent progress since the previous inspection, with the whole of the EYFS now being together in its own building and with the addition of a Nursery section. Outdoor provision has improved considerably and this is now available at all times to Nursery and pre-school children. Reception children have planned learning activities outside every day, as recommended by the previous inspection.
- 5.8 Leadership is highly effective at all levels, communicating clearly defined direction, standards and values which inspire and permeate the whole of the school community. It shapes and shares its vision with everyone who is involved in helping to achieve high academic, pastoral and personal standards for its pupils. Leadership is a visible presence throughout the school and this significantly contributes to the successful management of the whole school and to the fulfilment of its aims.
- 5.9 The school's strategic development plan is wide-ranging and detailed, with a clear ambition to make the levels of academic performance and the quality of pastoral care even higher. Founded on effective self-evaluation, the plan is regularly reviewed and revised by the governing body and senior management team.
- 5.10 Since the previous inspection and the acquisition of Bank Place, now home of the EYFS, the school's senior management has been restructured to provide for this change. Run with great pride and care, each of the three sites is under the oversight of either a deputy head or an assistant head. They are members of the senior management team, which also includes the head of learning support. The cohesiveness of the team and its frequent meetings ensure the maintenance of a common purpose and shared standards, as well as smooth transitions at the end of each key stage. Individual pupils are always the first item on the agenda of the care management committee, reflecting a clear priority. The team work extremely well together and give exemplary support to the school and its staff. The accessibility and approachability of senior management are noted and appreciated by staff, pupils and parents.
- 5.11 On a day-to-day basis the school runs very smoothly and efficiently. It is a busy and purposeful place, where pupils conduct themselves appropriately, knowing when to be quiet and when they can let off steam. While the school is well provided with hard play areas, the range of playground equipment limits pupils' scope for play. Clear and appropriately detailed, procedures and policies are well understood and implemented by all staff. The school fulfils its aim to promote high moral standards and to foster an awareness of others. At all levels and in all contexts, staff uphold values which encourage respect for other people, regardless of background, race or faith: the social harmony of the school demonstrates the success of this message. The ethos of the school also furthers the values of democratic processes and respect for the rule of law.
- 5.12 The senior management team is conscientious in its application of safeguarding policies and procedures for teachers after their appointment. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and

safety. Detailed whole-staff training has covered information about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and the importance of protecting pupils from dangerous influences. Further needs for professional development are identified by a thorough appraisal system, and staff are encouraged to go on courses and acquire advanced qualifications. Lesson observations and more informal visits by senior leaders ensure an open and positive attitude to school improvement and the sharing of good practice. This approach accords with the recommendation in the previous inspection report. For all year groups, staff combine to devise schemes of work and programmes of study, within a clearly defined framework. By using time in the middle of the morning in a well-focused way, the school meets the recommendation of the previous inspection report that it should increase time available for the academic curriculum.

- 5.13 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably-qualified staff. Leadership and senior management have not, however, ensured that all of the required checks, particularly those relating to criminal records and the barred list, have been undertaken before permitting a member of staff to start work at the school.
- 5.14 In the EYFS, relationships with parents are highly positive. The beginning and end of every day afford many informal opportunities for them to share information and concerns with the teachers. Parents appreciate the welcome evening soon after their child starts school, and parents' consultation evenings take place in the spring and summer. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few parents commented that they would like more of the school's communications about their child's progress to be made electronically.
- 5.15 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents of pupils in Years 1 to 6 indicated that they are overwhelmingly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. They are particularly pleased with the range of subjects and areas of expertise provided. They appreciate the way in which their children are looked after and the support given to very able pupils. They are very satisfied with the information provided by the school.
- 5.16 There are excellent relationships with parents, who appreciate the school's open door policy and the ready availability of the teachers. Although a few of the parents who answered the questionnaire felt that their concerns were not dealt with quickly enough, inspection evidence found that they were carefully and sensitively dealt with, in accordance with the school's published procedures.
- 5.17 Prospective parents receive a copy of the school DVD when they enquire about the school. This gives a bright and informative glimpse of life at the school. Welcoming and easy to navigate, the website provides a wealth of information for both present and prospective parents. Parents appreciate the welcome pack they receive at the start of each academic year which gives a brief outline of the curriculum for that year along with other vital information. At the start of every autumn term, parents are invited to a 'meet the teacher' session to learn about what life will be like for a pupil in that year. This formal introduction helps parents feel at ease about approaching teachers if there are any concerns.
- 5.18 Parents are routinely emailed about forthcoming events and can find out more through social media. Parents' consultation evenings are held in the spring and summer terms. A half-yearly assessment report is published at spring half term and

parents receive a full report in May. This gives a clear description of their child's achievements and progress, together with helpful suggestions for improvement.

- 5.19 Parents have excellent opportunities to be actively involved in the school. Many of them share their expertise and skills by coming in to school to talk about their professions, and they also help as volunteers on school trips. A very active parents' society welcomes all new families and organises a wide range of social events for both pupils and parents, such as the Halloween party and the parents' quiz and curry night. The parents' society not only raises money for school projects such as the new playground equipment, but also raises substantial amounts of money for charitable causes.

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