



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ELM GREEN PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Elm Green Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Elm Green Preparatory School
DfE Number	881/6017
Address	Elm Green Preparatory School Parsonage Lane Little Baddow Chelmsford Essex CM3 4SU
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Email Address	admin@elmgreen.essex.sch.uk
Principal	Mrs Ann Milner
Proprietor	Educational Options Limited
Age Range	4 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	220
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (122 boys; 98 girls)
Numbers by Age	4-5 (EYFS): 22 5-11: 198
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 220
Number of Boarders	Total: 0
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	20 May 2014 to 23 May 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in June 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the principal/proprietor, 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 Elizabeth Coley

Mrs Penelope Austin

Mrs Tracy Handford

Mrs Patricia Griffin

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Elm Green Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the ages of 4 to 11. It was founded in 1944 with just five pupils and was run by the same family until it was taken over in 2003 by Educational Options Limited, a private limited company, of which the current principal is the sole director. The school is situated in a rural location in Little Baddow, close to Chelmsford, within two to three acres of land which is surrounded by National Trust or diocesan woodland. It is accommodated in historic buildings, some of which were originally used for farming. The school has grassed and hard-standing play areas on the site, and uses a local sports field for games and athletics.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 220 pupils on the roll, 122 boys and 98 girls, of whom 22 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Fifty-eight pupils were in Years 1 and 2, and 140 were in Years 3 to 6. Twenty-three pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), but none has a statement of special educational needs. No pupils use English as an additional language. Pupils come from a very diverse range of backgrounds, with most coming from professional families. The majority of pupils are white British, with approximately one out of every 20 coming from a minority ethnic background. Most pupils live within a ten-mile radius of the school but some pupils travel much further to attend. The ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the co-owner has retired, and an additional class has been created in order to reduce the average class size to approximately 20. A new library building has been constructed, and a permanent structure has been built over the outdoor swimming pool, enabling its use all year round. Extra toilet facilities have been provided for the youngest children and the washrooms for the oldest pupils have been refurbished. The information and communication technology (ICT) provision has been upgraded together with the installation of interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. Soft-play areas within the playground have been refurbished and additional play equipment has been provided.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which pupils are encouraged and challenged to fulfil their potential. It seeks to foster curiosity and a love of learning which will enhance the pupils' whole education and provide a foundation for life-long learning. The school strives to provide a caring and compassionate ethos where pupils can live amicably together and develop values based on Christian principles, by instilling confidence, independence and building self-esteem within each individual pupil, encouraging courtesy, good manners and effective behaviour. It aims to work together with parents, promoting trust and respect, enlisting their co-operation and interest in order to create a happy partnership.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Elm Green Preparatory School largely succeeds in fulfilling its aims. Achievement is excellent, and all pupils, including those who have SEND and those who are more able, make at least good progress in their learning. They develop their knowledge, understanding and skills, particularly those in numeracy, literacy and ICT, to a high level across all subjects and in many extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The school prepares pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education. The excellent curriculum, together with a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits, strongly supports pupils' learning. Teaching is good overall and teachers' subject knowledge is very strong, but the style of teaching used in a small number of lessons observed reduced the opportunities for independent learning by the pupils. Pupils' excellent attitudes to their learning, their exemplary behaviour and their positive relationships with each other and with staff all play a significant part in contributing to their high-quality educational experiences. The EYFS soundly meets the needs of the range of children who attend; however, the information from assessment is not always used to plan the next steps in learning for individual children, and they do not have sufficient opportunity to investigate and explore outside.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent. Children in the EYFS form strong relationships with each other and their staff, are happy, well behaved and self-confident. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils have high-quality social and moral values so that they are confident, well mannered and courteous, in line with the school's aims. The older pupils in particular have a strong social conscience, and willingly organise fund-raising activities for those people locally, nationally and internationally less fortunate than themselves. The caring and compassionate ethos shown by most of the staff through their high levels of pastoral care supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness exceptionally well. This is reflected in the way pupils support each other, both in their achievements and through their general kindness to one another. However, staff are not consistent in their application of sanctions for any misbehaviour, and the record-keeping of any bullying concerns does not always indicate the sanctions used and how matters were concluded. The quality of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety and safeguarding are sound.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are sound and the two advisers support and challenge the principal in her vision for the school. However, governance has not been sufficiently rigorous in its monitoring of regulatory compliance, particularly concerning the safety of pupils and staff in the event of fire and with regard to recruitment procedures; a few staff did not have all the required checks completed before they began work at the school. The school development plan is suitably linked to staff professional development and the staff's performance management review, but lacks the success criteria which will ensure that it has an impact on the pupils' achievement and personal development. The strong commitment of senior leadership and the supportive staff team have enabled management processes, including curriculum planning, the use of assessment information, performance management review and staff awareness of the development plan, to improve significantly since the previous inspection. Links with parents and carers are excellent, although the records of each complaint are not always kept together centrally. Parents were positive in all but two aspects of school life; their concerns

were about the way the school deals with bullying and the amount of homework given. The inspection evidence agrees with the first, but does not substantiate the second point.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:

- update the fire alarm system to an automated, centralised system which enables the school to raise the alarm in a comprehensive manner and implement the recommendations identified in the fire officer's report [Part 3, paragraph 13, under Welfare, health and safety];
- ensure that recruitment checks, concerning the barred list check, medical fitness, application form and references, are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school [Part 4, paragraph 19.(2)(a) and 19.(3), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7, under Welfare, health and safety].

(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. Widen the range of teaching styles by sharing the most effective practice already within the school so that pupils have more opportunities for independent learning.
2. Ensure that all staff make consistent use of the full range of sanctions, as appropriate to any misbehaviour.
3. Improve the record-keeping of bullying concerns and all complaints.
4. Add success criteria to the school development plan which are linked to the impact on the achievement and personal development of the pupils.
5. Use the information from assessment to plan more successfully for children in the EYFS to investigate and explore in the outdoor classroom.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aim to foster curiosity and a love of learning, thereby encouraging and challenging them to fulfil their potential. In the EYFS, children of all abilities and needs, including those with SEND, make effective progress in relation to their starting points because of the encouragement and support they receive. They enjoy school and are particularly enthusiastic when they can be active and creative learners, as was seen in a music and movement lesson. Children express themselves clearly and confidently in their conversations and listen attentively. They display an excellent knowledge of phonics which they use most competently in their high-quality written work. They are beginning to read well. They work confidently with numbers to 20 and beyond and can do simple addition and subtraction sums. The children use their imaginations when they are given the opportunity; for example, children thoroughly enjoyed pretending to be investigators with magnifying glasses looking for mini-beasts.
- 3.3 In the rest of the school, pupils develop their understanding, knowledge and skills extremely well in all subject areas and in a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are excellent because the school focuses very successfully on these foundations for life-long learning, and these skills are applied across many areas of academic studies. Pupils are highly articulate and converse readily on many topics. Their reading and writing skills are strong, and they listen extremely well to each other with great respect. Their creativity is expressed well in subjects such as music and movement and art and design, and their ICT skills are strong. Pupils demonstrate high-quality reasoning skills and are adept at thinking for themselves, although opportunities for this in a few lessons were restricted because of the style of teaching. They develop a curiosity for knowledge and understanding, in line with the school's aims. Pupils' physical skills are also very well developed.
- 3.4 Considerable success is experienced by pupils across a broad range of activities which makes an extremely good contribution to their personal development. As they leave the school, the pupils' high level of achievement enables around two-thirds of them each year to transfer to the local maintained selective schools which have demanding entry requirements. On average, nine scholarships or awards are gained each year to independent schools, given for general academic achievement, sport or outstanding talent in dance, music or art. Success for individual pupils in the last two years has included the national winner for a portrait of the Queen in the Jubilee celebrations, a regional and national chess champion, national finalists in a quiz challenge and swimmers competing at local, regional and national levels. Team successes include the IAPS national netball and swimming finalists, winners of the district athletics, winners of the county cross-country competition, finalists in the area gymnastics tournament, and several trophies and prizes won at the local music festival. Many pupils achieve highly in instrumental music, dance, and speech and drama examinations.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of eleven have been exceptional overall in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools; they were exceptional in 2012 and high in 2011 and 2013. Results in mathematics have been

exceptional, and in English have been high. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make at least good progress, and, for some, progress is excellent, in relation to pupils of similar ability. These judgements were confirmed in lesson observations, examination of pupils' work and curriculum interviews with pupils. Those pupils with SEND also make at least good progress because of the support they are given in class, their individual lessons with specialist staff or because they are given tasks which are matched well to their ability so that they develop high levels of self-esteem. An example was seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils of differing abilities were given a variety of word problems; those pupils with SEND were very successful in deciding which operations were needed to solve problems which challenged them at their own level of ability, yet were achievable.

- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and support their achievements very strongly. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary and they clearly enjoy their learning. Their relationships with each other are outstanding, and those with their teachers generally have a positive impact on their achievement. Whatever the task, they concentrate very well, apply themselves and persevere. They consistently present work of an extremely high quality.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum which is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and visits. The curriculum is effective in covering the requisite areas of learning, is suitable for all ages and abilities, and is consistent with meeting the school's aim to foster curiosity and a love of learning which will enhance the pupils' whole education. It makes an excellent contribution to pupils' achievements.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, the dedicated and caring staff know all children very well and generally cater appropriately for their individual needs, including those pupils with SEND and those who are more able. Curriculum provision is effective in providing firm foundations in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, physical development and mathematics. Specialist teaching in music, French, physical education (PE) and ICT adds significantly to children's experiences and the effective development of their learning skills. Planning covers all areas of learning and adult-led sessions but does not sufficiently cover outdoor learning or child-initiated activities on a daily basis.
- 3.10 High academic expectations are evident in the rest of the school which are fostered by class teachers and subject specialists who teach and lead subjects, ensuring the careful management of curriculum progression. Curriculum planning is comprehensive and far more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection across all subjects. It is monitored by the senior management team who ensure that the needs of the pupils are being met and emphasise opportunities for cross-curricular links. Pupils are successfully prepared for senior school entrance examinations including those to local maintained selective schools, whilst maintaining a curriculum which is rich in aesthetic and creative development with opportunities in subjects such as art and design, and music. The school employs many different strategies, such as encouraging taster days, to ensure that pupils are eased through their transition to the senior schools of their choice.

- 3.11 The inclusion of French from Reception and Latin in Year 6 enhances the pupils' linguistic skills, and the development of speaking and listening skills from the youngest year groups impacts significantly on the pupils' ability to articulate their ideas and opinions and engage in their own learning across the range of subjects. The provision for ICT is excellent; it is increasingly incorporated into other subject areas and used in a cross-curricular approach. The comprehensive and well-structured programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) reflects the aims and ethos of the school. It encompasses topics that further the pupils' personal development whilst allowing for the flexibility needed to respond appropriately to the emerging needs of the pupils.
- 3.12 Curriculum opportunities for more able pupils are strong and these pupils benefit from a range of excellent enrichment activities for music, sport and art. Additional challenges and competitions are regularly designed to inspire them, as well as to provide opportunities for wider participation and to further encourage those with a specific interest, such as participation in the school quiz team. The provision for those pupils with SEND is good and this is a rapidly developing area of the school. Individual education plans are detailed giving targets for individual support and classroom strategies and are used effectively to show the progress of the pupils. An identification system is being further developed to ensure a timely and effective response to teachers' and parents' concerns and this is linked to the monitoring of assessments. Collaboration with pupils, teachers and parents is seen by the school as central to creating and reviewing individual education plans.
- 3.13 The curriculum for pupils is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities. Clubs such as cup-stacking, gardening, swimming and creative writing stimulate the pupils' interests and broaden their personal development. Music is a particular curricular and extra-curricular strength and pupils have the opportunity to learn a wide range of instruments. Extensive opportunities exist for many pupils to perform in concerts, ensembles, charity events and choirs as well as drama productions and this fosters their accomplishment in creative and performance skills. An extensive range of popular trips and visits extends the pupils' knowledge and interests and supports different areas of the curriculum. Residential trips to Danbury Camp and Hill Top are very popular.
- 3.14 The school has excellent links with the local and wider community including their National Trust neighbours, and fully participate in local and national concerts. They have particularly strong links through activities within the nearby village, such as participation in the 'Open Gardens' and Christmas Fayre, and with local schools through sports fixtures and other events. Visitors and church leaders from the community are invited into school to lead assemblies. The Year 6 pupils are justly proud of their ownership of the charities' provision, which is considerable and promotes and supports local, national and global charities through fund-raising activities chosen and organised by themselves.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching supports the school's aim to provide a stimulating environment in which pupils are encouraged and challenged to fulfil their potential, and makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievements. In the EYFS, the best examples of teaching provide effective opportunities for children to engage actively with their learning. Support for children with SEND is appropriate in the EYFS, although more able children are not always challenged and extended in the tasks set for them as, on occasions, expectations are not sufficiently high. The easily accessible outside area is under-used to provide opportunities for the children to investigate, explore and pursue independent activities. Regular assessments are made but are not always used to plan the next steps in learning for individuals to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children. Human and material resources are generally used effectively.
- 3.17 In the rest of the school, teaching enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of all subjects and they make at least good progress across the curriculum. Lesson planning is detailed and shows learning objectives, success criteria matched to pupils' needs and varied tasks for pupils of differing abilities. Pupils with SEND are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants in many lessons, which ensures that they understand the task they have been set and achieve success, building their self-confidence and self-esteem. Challenge is provided for all pupils, particularly the more able, in most lessons. Preparation for senior school entrance examinations is thorough and effective. Teachers show excellent knowledge and understanding of their subjects.
- 3.18 In many lessons teachers used a wide range of strategies and styles to stimulate pupils' interest and foster their application. In the most successful lessons, pupils are given time to develop their thinking and reasoning skills and to express their thoughts and opinions. In the few less successful lessons observed, independent learning by the pupils was restricted by the teaching style. Pertinent questions were posed, but the pupils were not given sufficient opportunity to express what they thought because staff intervened in their answers too soon. Learning opportunities were also reduced when lessons started late or where the teacher's introduction was over-lengthy, affecting the pace of the lesson. Very high standards of behaviour were evident in all lessons. Resources of a good quality and quantity are used well to support pupils' learning.
- 3.19 The school collects useful information on pupils' literacy and numeracy National Curriculum levels and standardised scores as they progress through the school. Since the previous inspection there has been an increase in the use of this data to monitor pupils' performance and to plan future steps in learning. The data is analysed by staff to ensure that pupils are progressing appropriately and to take action should performance drop to an unexpected level. Regular assessment of progress in other subjects is also comprehensive and used to set targets for the pupils' next steps in learning. Most marking adheres to the school's policy giving both praise and constructive advice for improvement. Pupils say that they find the comments help them to understand what to do to progress.
- 3.20 A small minority of parents raised concerns in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire about the amount of homework given but the inspection team does not agree with this view. No evidence of excessive work set was observed during the

examination of pupils' work or in the lessons observed. In interviews, pupils said that they accept and appreciate that as they approach examinations for senior school entry the amount of homework becomes heavier. They do not see homework as a problem, although they would prefer less homework in the holidays.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The personal development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' personal development is in line with the stated aims of the school in providing a caring and compassionate ethos where pupils can live amicably together and develop values based on Christian principles, by instilling confidence, independence and building self-esteem. Pupils are instinctively courteous, friendly and welcoming and show respect for themselves and each other. The personal development of all children in the EYFS is strong; they are happy, very well behaved and self-confident. They develop good relationships with their friends and the adults who care for them and make a positive contribution to their class activities. They show respect for others, know right from wrong, share and co-operate. By the end of Reception, children have mature attitudes towards their work and they form strong relationships with older pupils, which creates a sense of community. This, in addition to their increasing independence, prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- 4.3 The pupil's spiritual development is excellent in the rest of the school. Pupils are sensitive to the non-material aspects of life. They reflected extremely well in an assembly about the most important memories being those of the heart and mind, and further opportunities for reflection are provided in PSHE and religious education (RE), such as the question posed about 'what is faith and what difference does it make?'. Time for reflection is provided by the form teacher during class prayers and the saying of grace. Pupils embrace the peacefulness and beauty of the school site in the many designated seating areas during playtime extremely well. They appreciate the natural beauty of their surroundings. The pupils are emotionally mature and can discuss issues at a level well above that expected for their age, having great self-confidence and self-esteem.
- 4.4 The pupils demonstrate high levels of moral development. The school promotes a strong sense of shared values underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. The school's core values are evident through the children's attitudes and they are further embraced through the class 'values trees' which enable older pupils to nominate their peers for exemplifying the values at the heart of the school's ethos. Self-discipline extending to supportive behaviour is evident amongst pupils and they have a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils benefit from the opportunities to consider moral dilemmas, for example through discussions on Martin Luther King and his vision in an assembly or slavery and jazz in music lessons. Pupils' understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe is further enhanced by links with local services such as the police, who visit school as part of the PSHE curriculum about people who help within the community, leading discussions on responding to strangers, road safety and cyber-bullying. Further support is demonstrated through the regular celebrations of success which promotes self-belief, pride and kindness.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils across the school take on responsibility and carry out their duties exceptionally well with thought and care, either as class monitors in the younger forms or as a school council representative. There are extensive opportunities for responsibility in Year 6 to support younger pupils, acting as line leaders and lunch-time prefects, whose roles include leading pupils into assembly and helping the youngest clear away their lunch respectively. Pupils contribute extremely well to the wider society and reflect on the needs of

others through their extensive fund-raising and support of many charities around the world. Throughout the school, pupils develop a thorough understanding of community through the PSHE programme and they recognise their social responsibilities within the communities of home and school. Their excellent understanding of public institutions is strengthened through their PSHE studies. They annually visit, and have studied aspects of the work of, the Houses of Parliament, and have recently developed their understanding of the European Union.

- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate strong cultural awareness. Their understanding of the major faiths is excellent and they foster their respect and knowledge of other beliefs through visits to places of worship such as a Hindu Temple or a synagogue. Pupils from different faiths within the school community willingly contribute to RE lessons to foster understanding and respect. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures are strong, through their participation in themed days such as the French day or Africa week. Their knowledge of their own culture is at a high level through the many visits to museums, theatres and concerts.
- 4.7 Pupils are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education and those in Year 6 spoke confidently about the forthcoming transition. They leave the school as emotionally mature, articulate and confident individuals.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.9 Effective support and guidance are given to pupils and they feel safe and secure in their well-ordered learning environment, in line with the school's aims; this makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. In the EYFS, the children are well cared for by their key person who ensures that their needs are generally met. Staff here act as exemplary role models and promote the standards of behaviour and courtesy expected; the children respond by behaving well. Importance is placed on children's happiness and generally positive relationships. The children are taught how to keep themselves safe and they are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to be responsible for their own personal hygiene. Well-planned PE and swimming lessons for the EYFS promote a positive attitude to physical exercise and children understand about the importance of a healthy diet.
- 4.10 In the rest of the school, class teachers are central to the care of the pupils, overseeing both their academic and pastoral welfare. Staff share information well at weekly staff meetings and more regularly through notices in the staff room. Pupils causing concern are raised and monitored. In their responses to the questionnaires, a small minority of pupils said that they did not have an adult to go to if they had a problem, but during the inspection pupils said that this was not an issue and an example was observed by inspectors working successfully in practice. Pupils and parents appreciate that the principal welcomes them every day in the playground and that she is interested in each pupil's well-being.
- 4.11 Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves are strong. All staff know the pupils well and, whilst the vast majority of teachers care exceptionally well for pupils, a very small number do not consistently follow the school's policies or values. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. Any issues relating to pastoral care in either classroom or playground are communicated effectively to

relevant staff. Most class teachers take advantage of frequent opportunities to ensure the pupils' happiness and welfare.

- 4.12 Before-school and after-school clubs offer a helpful and flexible facility for families. A light breakfast or tea is offered. Lunches adequately provide a healthy and nutritious meal in the middle of the day with a choice of menus, and pupils are taught about healthy eating. They are given many opportunities to engage in, and understand the need for, regular exercise.
- 4.13 The behaviour policy is effective in promoting good behaviour and it provides a list of sanctions to be used in any instances of misbehaviour. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils said that staff were not fair in the way in which rewards and sanctions are given. The inspection evidence agrees with this view. In discussions with pupils they said that rewards are given less frequently in the senior classes. The behaviour logs indicate that the sanctions agreed in the policy are not always followed or applied consistently by all staff.
- 4.14 In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of parents and pupils raised concerns about the school dealing with any bullying that occurs. The inspection team agrees with these concerns. In discussions pupils said that they can go to staff about bullying or put a note in a 'worry box'. The records of bullying are detailed but do not always contain full information about the sanctions applied or indicate how matters were brought to a conclusion. The school's anti-bullying policy has recently been revised and now includes details about the school's response and advice to pupils should there be any cyber-bullying.
- 4.15 The school has a good plan to improve the educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.16 Although in their responses to the questionnaire pupils said the school does not listen or respond to their views, inspection evidence does not support this issue. Pupils have a mechanism for raising opinions, ideas or concerns through the school council. They say that they are confident that the school listens to their opinions and that they can initiate change and improvements, citing the refurbished washrooms as one of their achievements.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is sound.
- 4.18 The arrangements make a sound contribution to pupils' personal development. The safeguarding of pupils on a day-to-day basis is effective, but staff recruitment processes have not always been sufficiently rigorous. All staff are trained in child protection, and the designated senior persons are trained to the higher level at the correct intervals. New staff also receive child protection training as part of their induction process. Records of any involvement in disclosures and referrals are well kept and detailed, demonstrating good links with the local authority and other external agencies as necessary. In the EYFS, safeguarding arrangements are secure; all staff have received the necessary training in child protection procedures and have been appropriately checked on their recruitment. Children are well cared for in a welcoming environment; their safety within the setting is enhanced by effective risk assessments.
- 4.19 The school does not take all appropriate precautions to protect pupils and staff from the hazards of fire. The current fire alarm system does not enable the school to raise the alarm in a suitable manner. A fire risk assessment is carried out and

reviewed annually, and fire drills are held termly. Fire extinguishers are regularly checked and staff undergo training. Risk assessments are undertaken on all activities at school and on external visits, ensuring that those hazards identified are minimised. Particular care is taken when moving the pupils in 'lines' from the car park to the school along the lane, when parents support staff in the organisation and undertaking of these. Staff implement school health and safety policies and procedures conscientiously and refer any health and safety concerns to the senior leadership; consequently, they are generally quickly resolved.

- 4.20 Suitable provision is made for those pupils who may fall ill during the school day with appropriate medical facilities if required. A large number of staff are qualified in first aid. An accurate record is kept of any accidents or the administration of medicines and reported to parents as appropriate. The arrangements for the welfare of those pupils who have particular medical or educational needs or disabilities are carefully monitored. The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained, and correctly stored for three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 Governance of the school is sound.

5.2 Since the previous inspection, the principal has become the sole proprietor, when her former business partner retired from his directorship of the educational company. However, he still retains an interest in the running of the school by acting as an adviser to the principal, along with another adviser who also has an educational background. Together, they help to support the principal in her oversight of educational, welfare and financial matters. Senior managers know the advisers well as do some of the other staff. Governance ensures that the aims of the school are largely met and supports their fulfilment well; the principal's involvement with the EYFS is appropriate. Whilst much of the discussion with the advisers is not formally recorded, it is clear that the financial planning and provision for material resources, accommodation and staffing are good and meet the needs of the pupils. This is evidenced in the recent provision made for refurbished washrooms, the upgrade of ICT equipment, and the enclosing of the outdoor swimming pool.

5.3 The advisers, through their expertise in the field of education, support and challenge the principal to ensure that high educational standards are consistently maintained. A system for monitoring some aspects of welfare, health and safety concerning fire safety and the recruitment of staff is insufficiently rigorous, although the advisers have reviewed the policy and procedures for safeguarding with the principal, and considered the efficiency with which she carries out her duties as the designated senior person for child protection. Through their discussions with the principal about her vision for the future, the advisers are well informed about the strengths of, and challenges for, the school and support its improvement and growth.

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 sound.

5.5 Leadership and management enable the aims of the school to be largely fulfilled and in many ways reflect the excellent quality of the education provided and pupils' personal development. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are strongly committed to the academic progress and general well-being of the pupils, and work together effectively as a team. The senior management team demonstrates effective leadership, and has a strong vision for the future of the school. This has been demonstrated in a formal school development plan to which all staff have contributed, representing good progress since the previous inspection. It is focused well on some of the current areas for improvement as identified in the priorities from self-evaluation. Whilst the plan is constructed so that its objectives and actions to be taken are clear, there are no criteria linked to the impact on the pupils which will enable the school to know when it has been successful.

5.6 Policies are regularly reviewed, although scrutiny of the evidence prior to the inspection showed that the school has not always been rigorous in ensuring that it keeps up-to-date with the most recent regulatory requirements. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken suitable steps to ensure that identified

shortcomings in documentation had been dealt with. Staff share a great deal of information about pupils' progress and welfare both formally in staff meetings and informally at other times. This indicates the good level of care which is shown by teaching and non-teaching staff to all pupils, including those who need extra support and those who are more able, thus encouraging and challenging all to fulfil their potential, an aim which lies at the heart of the school's ethos.

- 5.7 Management processes are effective in supporting pupils' learning and development. Subject co-ordinators have produced schemes of work which are comprehensive, and they have good oversight of planning, the consistency of which represents an improvement since the previous inspection. They are also responsible, together with the senior management team, for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation and examining pupils' work on a regular basis, and these actions have had a positive impact on the pupils' achievement. In response to a recommendation at the time of the previous inspection, the performance management review system has been introduced and is suitably linked to the school development plan and in-service training. Staff are well qualified, given good induction training when they join the school and are deployed effectively to give the support required to meet the needs of the pupils, particularly those with SEND. All staff have been trained in the important areas of safeguarding and welfare, health and safety, according to their responsibilities, although the school has not ensured the safety of staff and pupils in the event of fire.
- 5.8 A centralised register accurately records the recruitment procedures carried out on staff when they are appointed and all staff have received an enhanced disclosure and barred list check from the Disclosure and Barring Service. However, a few recruitment checks on some staff in respect of the barred list check, medical fitness, application form and references, had not been carried out before the member of staff began work at the school. All checks have now been completed satisfactorily. The school immediately improved its recruitment procedures and checklist during the inspection. The accommodation and grounds are used and maintained well, and all support staff enable the school to function effectively. Displays of pupils' work around the school are of high quality.
- 5.9 In the EYFS, the management team and EYFS staff share a suitable vision for the continuing progress of the setting, through sound self-evaluation, particularly focusing on the development of the outside learning environment and the use of ICT, and plan for continuous improvement. Managers support staff through informal supervision arrangements and oversee educational programmes, but these are not formally recorded. Appraisals identify training needs but opportunities for training are limited. Staff work hard to promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere and good teamwork contributes effectively to the progress and development of all children.
- 5.10 Throughout the school, excellent relationships are fostered with parents through its highly effective communication systems, and the many and varied opportunities for them to be involved in school life. The very strong partnership that is developed with the parents of the youngest children is maintained as pupils progress through the school, in line with the school's aim of working together with parents promoting trust and respect, in order to create a happy partnership. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were highly supportive of almost all aspects of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the access to information and policies, the curriculum provided, the support given to very able pupils, and the way in which the school looks after their children.

- 5.11 In the EYFS, relationships with parents are strong and have a good impact on children's learning and development. Parents were very positive about the setting in their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Detailed reports give good information to these parents about their child's progress in all areas of learning. Induction days, communication between home and school, and the support which the 'shadow' pupils from Year 4 give when Reception children start ensure that they settle easily into school routines. Good partnerships have been established with parents in collaboration with external agencies when necessary, giving support in responding to children's individual needs.
- 5.12 Throughout the school, staff are readily available to parents and the school's open-door policy allows the vast majority of queries or concerns to be dealt with swiftly and informally. Equally staff can be contacted through the school office and they endeavour to respond quickly. The recently updated policy for handling complaints is available to parents. Any concerns are recorded carefully, although details about each complaint are not kept together centrally. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. The daily contact book used with the younger pupils ensures beneficial communication between home and school. Parents are invited to workshops and 'drop-in' sessions to gain greater insight into the teaching and learning. Parents are encouraged to support a variety of activities, including sporting fixtures, concerts and assemblies. They assist on outings and regularly help to ensure that all children are safe as they walk from the car park into school. The particular expertise of parents is used when appropriate to enhance the wider curriculum. The parents' association is particularly active and organises regular social and fund-raising events, the proceeds of which benefit the whole school, as with the covering of the swimming pool and paying for entertainers and activity camps.
- 5.13 A comprehensive but still developing website, school prospectus and parents' handbook provide all parents of current and prospective pupils with detailed and relevant information. At the end of the summer term all parents receive a full and very informative report on the progress made by their children, which includes helpful targets. Throughout the year interim reports and consultations keep parents well informed of progress and the ways in which their children can improve. The quality of reports has improved since the previous inspection.

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