



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**HANDCROSS PARK PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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## Handcross Park Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Handcross Park Preparatory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>938/6223</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY331321</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>932584</b>		
Address	<b>Handcross Park Preparatory School Handcross Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 6HF</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01444 400526</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01444 400527</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmaster@handxpark.com</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Graeme Owton</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Lindsay Tomlinson</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>328</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (182 boys; 146 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	7	5-11: <b>194</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	73	11-13: <b>54</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>291</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>37</b>	
	Full:	22	Weekly: <b>15</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mr Jason Gayler</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>24 Jun 2014 to 27 Jun 2014</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2012.

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](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and 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 Pamela Leech	Reporting Inspector
Mr Robin Badham-Thornhill	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mr David Callender	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Hilary Wyatt	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Susan Rix	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Handcross Park Preparatory School is an independent school catering for girls and boys from two to thirteen years of age. The school, which was established in 1887, is set in 50 acres of playing fields and grounds near Haywards Heath in Sussex, and comprises the original mansion house with additional educational facilities. The school aims to create an environment where all pupils are encouraged to strive for excellence in an atmosphere of kindness and care for each other. It seeks to prepare pupils for the responsibilities and challenges of the world around them. Good manners and mutual respect are amongst the school's ten core values. The school is based on traditional Christian beliefs and welcomes pupils of all faiths or of none.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has built a new classroom block and has extended the boarding house. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision has been enhanced to provide wireless networking across the campus and each pupil with portable devices. The school has created natural learning environments and an organic garden, also investing in an extensive mobile theatre facility.
- 1.3 Currently, there 328 pupils on roll: 182 boys and 146 girls. Of these, 80 children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and 37 are boarders. The pre-prep comprises the EYFS and Years 1 and 2, and the prep school caters for Years 3 to 8. The majority of pupils are of white British origin, with about a quarter of boarders from overseas, mostly from Spain, Russia, China and Bulgaria. Many belong to families in professional occupations.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. Pupils leaving at the age of 13 gain places at senior independent schools, both boarding and day, or transfer to local maintained secondary schools. Eleven pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom are provided with learning support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, and 22 have English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Reception onwards and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the Nursery is shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Little Owls	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Wise Owls	Nursery (3 to 4 years)

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

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

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in its aims to offer an educational experience where pupils learn to strive for excellence in a supportive, caring atmosphere. Children in the EYFS make an excellent start and flourish in the warm, welcoming environment. In response to a recommendation of the previous inspection, adult-led activities inspire children and promote high expectations. Throughout the school pupils develop a thorough understanding of basic skills and achieve high standards in English and mathematics. They confidently apply their knowledge to science subjects and to problem solving. The curriculum is broad and well balanced, and extra-curricular provision is of a high standard. Teaching is excellent. Thorough assessment procedures enable staff to gain an understanding of the individual needs of pupils. More able pupils are identified and receive challenging work to extend their learning. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported. Lesson planning is comprehensive and allows all pupils to make good progress. Pupils are competent users of ICT and routinely incorporate their skills in lessons. A well-resourced library is enjoyed by pupils but is not wholly accessible to all. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. They are articulate in classes and enjoy their lessons.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. The school works hard to promote their well-being and pupils demonstrate great pride in their school. They show respect and kindness towards each other. They take their responsibilities seriously and are eager to contribute to their community, showing an appreciation for the family ethos that underpins daily routines. The standard of behaviour is excellent. Pupils are confident that staff will help and guide them with concerns, and are well supported by the high level of pastoral care across the school. Boarders appreciate their 'home from home' and may use the internet or mobile telephones at set times to contact their parents in private, and the boarding office at other times, though opportunities for this are sometimes limited. Appropriate measures are in place to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent and governors are highly supportive of the school. They discharge their legal responsibilities effectively and maintain excellent oversight across the school. Senior management staff have strengthened links across the school and policies and procedures are consistently implemented, as recommended at the previous inspection. Within the EYFS, there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of management between year groups. A whole-school staff appraisal system has been implemented but is not yet effective for all boarding staff, as recommended at the previous inspection. The process for the safe recruitment of staff and procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorously implemented. Pupils' educational and pastoral needs are fully supported by the comprehensive procedures for assessment and tracking. Links with parents are excellent.



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

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

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

1. Provide greater access to the library for all pupils.
2. Hold regular performance review meetings to include all boarding staff.
3. Provide more opportunities for boarders to communicate with their families in private.
4. Improve the consistency of management within the EYFS.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated and demonstrate a willingness to learn, in accordance with the school's aims to inspire a love of learning. They are articulate and enthusiastic, listen attentively and express their opinions confidently. They reach high standards in reading and are able to write fluently in all subjects across the curriculum, developing a competent understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and are able to apply logical and mathematical understanding to scientific subjects. They are competent users of ICT.
- 3.3 Pupils are creative in their artwork, as can be seen in the paintings and models displayed around the school. They think logically and work independently, as, for example, in an ICT lesson when creating their own information websites. Pupils competing in teams to solve physical problems showed how they approach co-operative learning with maturity and a sense of purpose.
- 3.4 Many pupils participate in public speaking, drama, dance and music activities, achieving high standards in examinations. They sing in school choirs, taking part successfully in local festivals, and have received national recognition for their artwork. Pupils participate enthusiastically in an extensive range of sports, including inter-school competitions, achieving notable success at national and county level in a wide variety of activities.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work, performance in lessons and the results of standardised tests of attainment in English and mathematics, it is judged to be good. Many pupils gain academic, music, drama and sports scholarships to senior schools. This level of performance represents good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Individually tailored programmes of study enable pupils with SEND or EAL to make excellent progress. More able pupils extend their understanding and learning through the opportunities provided for them within and beyond the curriculum and make excellent progress.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes to learning, relishing the challenges of working independently as well as with each other. They apply themselves well and show great pride in their work. They enjoy their learning.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum fully supports the aims of the school to provide a broad and rounded education that stretches the pupils academically, intellectually, physically, artistically, musically and spiritually. The varied and well-balanced curriculum extends beyond the requisite areas of learning, with the addition of three modern foreign languages: French, Spanish and Mandarin. It is further enriched by the inclusion of Latin, ICT, personal, social and health education, religious studies and philosophy. An overwhelming majority of parents feel that the school offers an appropriate range of subjects.
- 3.9 Thorough planning takes account of a variety of links across a range of subjects and incorporates the use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning where possible. Effective use of portable devices was observed in a mathematics lesson where pupils were exploring probability, while the ICT suite was used in a science lesson for pupils to design a healthy living leaflet.
- 3.10 The curriculum is appropriate to the ages and needs of all pupils. The more able pupils and those with SEND or EAL are provided with individual tasks to challenge and extend their learning and are very well supported, thus enabling very good progress to be made. Scholars are provided with an extensive programme of study in core subjects in their final year. Pupils use the many opportunities to express their creativity in music, art, drama, and design and technology. Younger pupils were seen developing their collaborative working skills to build highly imaginative models of lighthouses.
- 3.11 Pupils benefit from a physical education (PE) and games programme that provides excellent opportunities in a wide range of sports. The number of sports teams has been increased so that all pupils have the opportunity to represent the school and experience the ethos of taking part in external fixtures.
- 3.12 The academic curriculum is supported by an excellent extra-curricular programme. Pupils choose from a wide and expanding range of creative and general interest activities, in addition to sports and music. These include chess, cooking, an organic life club that includes animal husbandry and horticulture, and art and craft clubs. A racing team club enables pupils to work collaboratively and learn technological and electronic skills in the construction and racing of an electric powered racing car. Musical activities include a wide range of instrumental teaching, school choirs, a musical theatre singing group, a jazz band and a school orchestra.
- 3.13 Pupils' education is enriched by a range of residential and other visits, including day trips to a nearby observatory and to local and national museums. Residential trips include visits to Lulworth Cove and an outdoor activity centre. Pupils throughout the school enjoy a comprehensive programme of visiting speakers.
- 3.14 Excellent links with the local community add significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to develop their social skills and community involvement in a variety of ways, including visiting a care home to play games and perform music, and singing Christmas carols at a local National Trust venue. The local community is encouraged to share the school facilities through social functions. Several local primary schools enjoy use of the sports facilities, including the swimming pool. Pupils are very successfully engaged in a wide range of charitable

activities, raising substantial amounts of money and supporting a diverse range of communities.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Teaching is highly effective in supporting pupils' progress and makes an excellent contribution to their high levels of achievement, fully in line with the school's aims to foster a desire to learn. Extremely well-planned lessons support pupils' different needs and encourage independent learning. As a result, lessons are stimulating and engage the pupils. They are well paced, with excellent use of skilful questioning and demonstration to encourage lively debate and motivate pupils. For example, in a geography lesson, pupils discussed natural disasters and following a demonstration, simulated their own tornado using water in a jam jar. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons allow pupils to evaluate their learning.
- 3.17 Teaching meets the needs of pupils of different abilities extremely well. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported through individual tuition, with carefully planned use of additional staff in lessons. These pupils and those who are more able also benefit from extra lessons given by specialist staff and teachers encourage pupils to believe in themselves and try to fulfil their potential.
- 3.18 Teachers contribute excellent subject knowledge, as well as enthusiasm and humour to their lessons. They are not afraid to take risks, and lessons involve a variety of teaching approaches through pupil-led debate, collaborative work, discussion and peer evaluation. Teaching assistants support the pupils and are well directed by teachers. Classrooms are well resourced, with good quality equipment and teaching aids to support teaching and learning. Teachers employ ICT imaginatively in all subjects to enhance the pupils' learning, for example communication through a video link and excellent use of interactive whiteboards. The library is well resourced but is not accessible to pupils at all times.
- 3.19 The relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and friendly, and an intellectually challenging atmosphere pervades lessons. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and to undertake independent study and research. In response to the questionnaire, a very small minority of parents felt that more able pupils do not receive appropriate support. From lesson observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of schemes of work, inspectors judged that these pupils are very well supported. Almost all pupils felt that teachers help them to learn and give them interesting work to do, enabling them to make very good progress. Teachers are generous in their encouragement and praise in lessons and around the school.
- 3.20 A few pupils responding to the questionnaire said that homework does not help them to learn. In discussions, however, pupils said that homework helps them to prepare for their lessons. They are appreciative of the feedback comments and targets to help them learn. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that appropriate homework is set by teachers. Marking follows the school's marking policy and is thorough, with many helpful comments and suggestions to help pupils improve. Assessment procedures are excellent.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 This high standard accords with the school's core values to create a culture of kindness, good manners and consideration for others.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school's Christian ethos is reflected in its open and welcoming community, and nurtures excellent relationships. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds are confident and self-aware, developing a high degree of spiritual awareness. They understand non-material aspects of life. Pupils demonstrate high levels of thoughtful and kind behaviour towards each other, encouraged by the school, and show considerable emotional maturity.
- 4.4 Pupils have excellent moral awareness. They have a mature sense of what is right and wrong, and understand and respect the school rules. Standards of behaviour are high and pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. Younger pupils respect the code of conduct that guides their daily behaviour and older pupils are eager to be good role models. Pupils are encouraged to consider ethical issues in many lessons and develop clear moral values in contributing to the well-being of their community.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are aware of the needs of others around them and are patient and supportive. Those older enjoy looking after their younger 'buddies' in school. Pupils speak highly of the 'pilot' system where those new to the school are guided gently through their first weeks by a responsible peer. Pupils take their school responsibilities seriously. They develop leadership skills as prefects and representatives on pupil councils. Through the prefect election system, pupils appreciate aspects of political life. The democratically elected pupil charity council co-ordinates suggestions for charitable support, enabling pupils to develop strong initiative and organisational skills, as displayed in the numerous bake sales organised and run by different year groups. Pupils of all ages are aware of others less fortunate than themselves and are keen to raise funds for a wide variety of good causes, for example a national children's charity and a large hospital.
- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils have a keen understanding of Western culture and traditions, and respect faiths and cultures which are different from their own. They are proud of their kind and tolerant community. Pupils participate enthusiastically in many cultural community events, play instruments, sing in concerts and take part in drama productions.
- 4.7 By the time pupils are ready to leave the school, they have reached mature, excellent standards of personal development.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Committed staff work hard to provide highly effective and caring support for pupils, fulfilling the school's aims to ensure a welcoming and supportive community where each pupil is valued. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are strong. Staff effectively monitor individual pastoral needs through the dynamic tutorial system. Extended form periods enable tutors to get to know their pupils well and to provide sensitive and individual support and guidance. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that their children are extremely well looked after and happy, and are highly appreciative of the care their children receive.
- 4.10 Numerous sporting events, activities and clubs throughout the school week help pupils to keep fit. In their questionnaire responses a very small minority of pupils were dissatisfied with the school's provision of food. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Inspectors found that all meals are home cooked, using locally sourced produce. Menus are nutritious and well balanced. Attractive presentation encourages pupils to make healthy choices. All dietary needs are fully met.
- 4.11 A very small minority of parents responding to the questionnaire expressed concerns about bullying. In discussion and responses to their questionnaire, pupils were clear that if bullying occurs, staff deal with it promptly and effectively. Examination of school records confirmed this view. Pupils say that they like being at the school and know to whom they can turn to for help and advice. Daily form teacher time and an 'open door' policy ensure that pupils can easily share any concerns that they may have with members of staff.
- 4.12 In response to the questionnaire, a few pupils said that rewards and sanctions are not given fairly by teachers. Evidence from discussions with pupils and staff and from records does not support this view. Inspectors found that rewards and sanctions are fairly and consistently applied and carefully recorded. Pupils understand why they may receive a work or behaviour 'minus' and relish opportunities to win points for their houses.
- 4.13 In response to the questionnaire, a few pupils did not think that the school seeks or responds to their views. Inspectors found that pupils have many opportunities to express their views. Pupils are able to contribute to the life of the school in many ways and they have the opportunity to give their opinions through the school council, the food committee and the eco council.
- 4.14 The school has a comprehensive plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 Arrangements to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. Staff receive annual training in child protection and there are excellent systems in place for the induction of new members of staff. Safeguarding policies are detailed and rigorous, with suitable procedures that are appropriately implemented. Every effort is made to minimise the risk of fire, and risk assessments are revised annually. Regular fire drills and weekly fire alarm tests are carried out and meticulously recorded. Electrical appliances are regularly tested and appropriate records kept. Risk assessments for buildings and grounds and for educational visits are comprehensive, and premises are well maintained. Drinking water is available at all times.
- 4.17 Appropriate policies are implemented for promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils. First-aid provision is excellent, with appropriately sited equipment. A high number of staff are qualified first aiders and staff with responsibility for younger children have received paediatric first-aid training. The facilities for pupils who are unwell are of good quality. Medication is appropriately stored and administered, with appropriate recording systems in place. Admission and attendance records are suitably maintained and stored.

#### **4.(d) The quality of boarding**

- 4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarding contributes significantly to the ethos of the school by providing a welcoming and harmonious environment where boarders thrive. Boarders demonstrate loyalty and pride in their house, stating that they feel happy and safe. They develop into polite, articulate young people with a keen appreciation of the community to which they belong. Boarders enjoy respectful and warm relationships with staff and peers, and feel individually valued and supported. They are confident and self-reliant. Boarders are able to express their views through the school council and through easy and informal communication with the staff who look after them. Boarders from overseas feel welcomed and are quickly integrated into the life of their house. Boarders are encouraged to be fit and healthy. They are able to use the excellent facilities of the school and enjoy a wide range of activities after school and at weekends. In questionnaire responses a few boarders disagreed that they are treated fairly. Inspectors found that the boarding rewards and sanctions policy is clear and that procedures are followed. Behaviour in the boarding house is exemplary.
- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. The boarding house is welcoming, comfortable and well maintained, and benefits from the current programme of refurbishment; the remaining shower areas are due to be completed imminently. Hot water is in generous supply. Appropriate laundry provision ensures that boarders' needs are fully met. Medical arrangements are of high quality. Accommodation for boarders who are unwell or injured is comfortable and since the previous inspection, appropriate washing and toilet facilities have been provided near the medical isolation room. All medication is appropriately stored, administered and recorded, with parents' consent in place. Medical visits are arranged as necessary, and boarders have access to a doctor and medical treatment as required. Boarders have a range of adults to whom they may turn for guidance,

including an independent listener, as required, and they are confident that they will receive help and guidance.

- 4.21 The boarding house has well-arranged common rooms and there are suitable facilities where boarders may work. Many boarders personalise their areas with posters and photographs. Boarders have lockable spaces and house staff are able to look after any valuables. Small purchases may be made from local shops and many boarders replenish their supplies on weekend visits home. A very small minority of boarders responding to the pupils' questionnaire felt that drinking water and snacks are not always available outside mealtimes. In discussions with boarders and staff and through general observation, inspectors found that labelled drinking water and snacks are readily available. Boarders' mealtimes are pleasant and convivial. In questionnaire responses, a few boarders expressed reservations about the balance of activities and free time. Inspectors found that in addition to organised house visits and trips, an imaginative extra-curricular programme offers boarders a wide choice of activities. Non-resident staff also contribute effectively to boarders' development through the organisation of extra-curricular activities and weekend duties. Quieter weekend programmes allow boarders space to unwind and relax. Boarders may keep in touch with parents through email, video calls and mobile telephones at set times. They can use the boarding office telephone in private at other times, however opportunities for this are limited.
- 4.22 The arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are excellent. Boarders say that they feel safe in their house and around the campus. The school's safeguarding arrangements are thorough and are supported by a comprehensive safeguarding policy. All staff understand their safeguarding roles. Appropriate fire risk assessments are in place and fire logs are thoroughly maintained and up to date. Fire zones, extinguishers and emergency lighting are routinely checked, with appropriate records kept. Regular fire drills and rigorously monitored procedures for signing in and out ensure that staff are aware of boarders' whereabouts at all times. The missing pupil policy is clearly understood. Resident staff are available throughout the night should boarders need assistance and may be easily contacted. Effective anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures are in place, and this is reflected in the atmosphere of trust and respect which characterises the house. Staff work hard to promote excellent relationships within the boarding community, and boarders have confidence that any concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively.
- 4.23 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent and strongly support the school's aim to create a home away from home for boarders. Boarding is well led by highly dedicated staff who have a clear understanding of their roles. Resident staff meet both informally and formally to discuss the needs of individual boarders, as well as to plan future developments. In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, a suitable appraisal system has been established to support the professional development of boarding staff, although formal one-to-one meetings are not yet in place. Gap Year students are allowed more independence when supervising boarders. Staff receive regular training and are encouraged to take further external courses. Policies and procedures are constantly reviewed and updated. A clear complaints policy is available to parents and boarders. Parents responding to the questionnaire were highly satisfied with the care their children receive and boarders endorsed this sentiment wholeheartedly.



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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body has a clear vision for the future of the school and is highly supportive of the school's aims to provide an excellent educational experience for all pupils. All governors bring much local knowledge, in addition to a wide range of experience and expertise.
- 5.3 Governors maintain highly effective oversight of the school through active financial and education committees, investing in high quality staffing, resources and facilities. They maintain an excellent insight into the working of the school through regular visits to the EYFS, the boarding house, classrooms and school events. They pay close attention to reports from senior managers and hold discussions with staff and pupils. All governors are well known to staff and accessible to parents.
- 5.4 Governors are meticulous in discharging their responsibilities for child protection and welfare, health and safety throughout the school. All governors undertake an annual review of the safeguarding policy and practice, as required.

### **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 excellent.
- 5.6 Highly effective leadership, well supported by a strong management structure, enables the school to fully meet its aims to provide an education that celebrates the uniqueness of each pupil and encourages all to strive to achieve their best. Links between all parts of the school have been significantly strengthened, as recommended at the previous inspection, and policies and procedures are now consistently and rigorously implemented. A comprehensive and detailed development plan reflects the school's commitment to excellence in all areas. Management staff have a clear oversight of the school's educational direction and have implemented positive strategies to enhance the provision for all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able pupils. As a result, pupils attain high standards, develop excellent personal qualities, and feel safe and happy at school.
- 5.7 Heads of department routinely monitor standards of teaching and learning. Planning is thorough and consistent across all departments, with excellent schemes of work and procedures for evaluating pupils' ability and progress. Highly effective future planning is based upon rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, resulting in exciting opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning experience, such as the use of portable ICT devices across the timetable. Teaching staff benefit from regular formal appraisal and continuing opportunities for professional development. Formal appraisal is not yet in place for all boarding staff. Induction training for new staff is extremely well managed. The strong tutor system supports pupils and promotes very high levels of pastoral development.

- 5.8 All staff receive thorough and regular training in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Policies meet requirements and are appropriately implemented. Rigorous recruitment procedures are in place. The school is diligent in carrying out and recording the required checks to ensure the suitability of governors, staff and others.
- 5.9 Links with parents are excellent. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. Much information is exchanged about pupils' progress. In the prep school parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress, successes and areas for development through detailed individual full reports, grade cards and parents' consultation evenings. In the pre-prep, parents receive reports and are invited to parents' consultations. The school operates an 'open door' policy and parents are welcome to contact the school at any time. Regular communication is also maintained through pupil planners and contact books. In discussion, parents praised the prompt response they receive to their email messages.
- 5.10 The school maintains highly constructive relations with parents. Parents responding to the questionnaire were extremely satisfied with the information they receive about school activities and events. A text message system enables the school to contact all parents rapidly when necessary. The parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with detailed information in useful handbooks. Parents are invited to a rich selection of educational and social events throughout the year, including information evenings on topics such as internet safety or transition to the next educational stage, and a formal tea party, where pupils and parents are introduced to teachers and classrooms. The school is proactive in seeking the views of parents and conducts parent surveys every two years. Through parent forums, the minutes of which are circulated to all parents, senior management staff listen and respond to any issues raised.
- 5.11 An active parents' association organises social events, such as quizzes, pupil discos, fetes and a summer ball. Funds raised are used to purchase resources for the direct benefit of the pupils.
- 5.12 A very small number of parents were not satisfied with the way in which the school handles their concerns. Inspectors found that a suitable complaints policy is in place and that concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively, in line with stated procedures.

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

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

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

- 6.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the children who attend. The educational programmes cover the prime and specific areas of learning extremely well, using a themed approach for each half term. All children reach the level of development typical for their age. The programmes are enhanced by specialist teaching in music, PE, swimming and Spanish from the Nursery onwards, together with Mandarin from Reception. A stimulating variety of activities, including yoga, dance and sports and a variety of visits and visitors to the school, adds breadth and depth to the curriculum, helping to ensure that the children develop new interests and skills and achieve extremely well. As a result, children develop a good capacity to learn and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. All children with SEND or EAL are identified early. Well-targeted interventions and individual support from the children's key people ensure that their needs are met and good progress is made. Staff generally support more able children well, but occasionally opportunities to extend and challenge these children are limited.
- 6.2 Staff have high expectations of all the children and use regular assessments of their knowledge, skills, understanding and interests to plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, planning is dynamic and responsive to the children's needs. Staff routinely reflect on the children's engagement in work tasks and play, and provide additional resources to enthuse and extend the children's imagination and creativity. They note signs of in-depth involvement and sustained concentration and encourage investigation. Children under the age of three are given excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, as shown when a group was highly engaged in harvesting fruit and vegetables from the garden, investigating the shapes, sizes and scents of the produce and preparing it to eat as part of a picnic. Older children delighted in creating animal costumes to use in a dramatisation of the adventures of Odysseus. Children are given excellent opportunities to develop their listening and communication skills and their physical abilities through the provision of a wide range of stimulating and open-ended resources, both indoors and out. The outdoor environment and outdoor learning are valued extremely highly and used effectively to enhance the children's development.
- 6.3 All EYFS staff ensure that parents are highly involved in their children's learning and achievements. Parents greatly appreciate the help and advice they receive and the prompt response to any queries. Developmental and progress records, to which parents are invited to contribute, are shared at regular parents' meetings, and reports are comprehensive and informative. Parents receive much information from the school through the regular newsletters, contact books and email. In response to the questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the care and education provided for their children.

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

- 6.4 The contribution of the early years provision to the children's well-being is outstanding. Caring and committed staff help all children, including those in need of additional support, to form strong and trusting relationships with their key person and with other adults in their classes. As a result, the children grow in confidence and thrive happily in the warm and purposeful atmosphere of the setting, enjoying what they do. The youngest children are sensitively guided to develop respect for one another, share and be kind, as shown when a child independently helped another struggling to put on an apron. Older children work co-operatively, as seen in a practical mathematics lesson where they enjoyed working in pairs to measure objects and equipment in the playground. Throughout the EYFS, adults promote good behaviour as role models. They have high expectations of the children and use frequent praise and encouragement to support their personal development. Children are given time to play and explore so that they are keen to investigate and excited by the challenges set each day. The outdoor environment and resources are used highly effectively to allow children to develop a safe understanding of risk.
- 6.5 From an early age the children are taught to manage their own personal hygiene. Staff promote a positive attitude towards healthy eating, with the provision of healthy snacks and lunches. Older children choose food independently at lunchtime and enjoy the variety on offer. Children are given many opportunities to be physically active, both in adult-led sessions and through the outdoor learning and play area.
- 6.6 Children are prepared for their educational transitions extremely well. A weekly toddler group enables the youngest children to become familiar with the Nursery. Staff regularly visit their new intake children in their classes during the summer term. Staff liaison and taster sessions in new classes enable a smooth progression throughout the EYFS and to Year 1. Some children attend other nurseries part-time, with whom the school's staff make contact to ensure effective exchange of information on these children's progress.

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

- 6.7 The leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. Well-informed and knowledgeable governance provides highly effective oversight of the setting through regular visits, and monitoring of the development plan and policies, offering advice and challenge to support ongoing improvements to the educational programmes and practice. The school meets its responsibilities in terms of the learning and development requirements, including overseeing the educational programme. Stringent adherence to welfare, health and safety requirements and comprehensive risk assessments ensure that the children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. Daily checks are carried out throughout the setting and external visits are carefully planned, risk assessed and evaluated. Safeguarding procedures are thorough; staff are given regular training. New staff receive clear guidance on child protection and welfare, health and safety as part of their induction.
- 6.8 Senior leadership is extremely effective in ensuring that practice is of a consistently high standard, through regular monitoring of planning and assessments, and observations of teaching. There is a clear drive for continuous improvement and an enthusiasm and commitment to develop the setting. However, there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of management within the different EYFS year

groups. All staff in the EYFS are involved in self-evaluation, which feeds into comprehensive development planning and incorporates staff suggestions, setting a clear vision for future development. An established appraisal system identifies individual needs for professional development. Formal supervision arrangements to enable staff to discuss any issues and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

- 6.9 The setting has productive relationships with the local authority and works with external agencies and parents to ensure that children receive any support they need.

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

- 6.10 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. As a result, children, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, make at least good and often excellent progress according to their starting points. Children of all ages are prepared well for the next stages of their education. They reach the expected levels of development by the end of the EYFS and often exceed age-related expectations. Children in Reception express themselves confidently, can read simple texts and write straightforward sentences with independence. More able children read with fluency and are competent independent writers. They can also understand simple vocabulary and read some characters in Mandarin. They can measure and estimate measurements, using both standard and non-standard units.
- 6.11 Those under the age of three demonstrate good manual dexterity, such as when cutting a sandwich or painting, and work with sustained concentration on a chosen task. Most can manage their own personal needs independently, communicate well and are secure in their relationships with adults and their peers. Older Nursery children use simple ICT games independently, select their own equipment with independence and play creatively. Attractive displays reflect the high standards they achieve. Throughout the EYFS, the children's personal and emotional development is excellent. They work constructively together, share and take turns, investigate confidently and play imaginatively. They enjoy coming to school and feel valued, secure and happy in the caring and welcoming environment.
- 6.12 All requirements for safeguarding and welfare have been met. All concerned with the leadership and management of the setting are fully committed to continuing improvement.
- 6.13 At the previous inspection the school was advised to further develop adult-led activities. Staff training now ensures that staff activities are well led to challenge and motivate children.

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

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

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