



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
OAKFIELD PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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Oakfield Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Oakfield Preparatory School
DfE Number	208/6109
EYFS Number	EY332075
Registered Charity Number	270901
Address	Oakfield Preparatory School 125-128 Thurlow Park Road West Dulwich London SE21 8HP
Telephone Number	020 8670 4206
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Email Address	info@oakfield.dulwich.sch.uk
Principal	Mrs Jane Stevens
Chair of Governors	Mr Neil McIntosh
Age Range	2 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	409
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (227 boys; 182 girls)
Numbers by Age	2-5 (EYFS): 142 5-11: 267
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 409
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Moyra Thompson
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 2011.

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

Inspectors

Mr Keith Morrow

Mr Bryan Kane

Mr Umeshchandra Raja

Mr John Shackleton

Mrs Sue Bennett

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Oakfield Preparatory School is an independent school for boys and girls aged from two to eleven years. Established in 1888 in four former town houses in West Dulwich, Oakfield Preparatory School is organised into the Lower School, on the south side of the South Circular Road, and the Upper School, on the north side of the road. The Lower School includes the Nursery, Lower Foundation (ages three to four years), Reception, and Year 1 classes. The Upper School accommodates Years 2 to 6. The school has been owned by the CfBT Education Trust since 2002. Since the previous inspection, a local board of advisory governors has been established, chaired by the former chief executive officer of CfBT Education Trust, the school's proprietor. The school aims to give its pupils a caring, challenging and inspiring environment where they can develop during their formative years. Since the previous inspection in 2011, the school has introduced formal assessments in Years 1, 3 and 5, which give standardised scores in mathematics and English. In addition, the school's management team has been expanded to include the director of studies and assessment co-ordinator.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, the total number of full-time pupils was 409, with 227 boys and 182 girls. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) included 72 full-time children aged from two to five, and an additional 70 attended part-time. There were 267 pupils Years 1 to 6. The majority of pupils live in Dulwich, Bromley, Norwood, Sydenham or Forest Hill. Pupils come from a range of parental backgrounds and from a broad ethnic mix, representative of South London.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the school as measured by standardised tests is above the national average with a fairly wide spread of abilities. There are 85 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and one of these has a statement; 67 receive specialist learning support and 16 have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL). At the age of 11, pupils progress on to a range of senior schools. In the current school year, all leavers have been successful in gaining a place at their school of first choice.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to Years 1 to 6. For the EYFS, the year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Ages 2 to 3
Lower Foundation	Ages 3 to 4
Upper Foundation	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is successful in meeting its aims, for example in providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, and giving them a good all-round education. Children in the EYFS setting receive an outstanding start to their school careers. Pupils achieve well above the average for maintained primary schools in national tests at the age of 7 and above the national average at age 11. The quality of pupils' work is very good, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT) and art, and pupils are successful in their learning. The great majority of pupils are successful in gaining a place at their senior school of choice when they leave at the age of 11, and many gain scholarships to selective senior schools. Pupils achieve well in their activities, including music and sport. Pupils' achievements are well supported by the good curricular provision and the good teaching. Although the school has introduced new assessment and tracking procedures, these are not sufficiently used to set targets and challenges for the more able pupils. Provision to extend the more able pupils in lessons is under-developed.
- 2.2 In Years 1 to 6, pupils' personal development is good, and in the EYFS it is outstanding. Pupils feel well supported, both in terms of the guidance they receive with their work and with pastoral issues, which are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Pupils' behaviour is good and relationships between pupils and with staff are very positive. Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, although the safeguarding policy has not been fully implemented in the recent past, in respect of obtaining references for some new staff. All omissions had been rectified by the end of the inspection.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is sound. The newly formed local board of governors offers the leadership support and encouragement and encompasses a broad range of skills and expertise. The school's proprietors, CfBT, provide aspects of governance, such as financial oversight. Most issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed, however, at the start of the inspection there were historic gaps in securing references prior to staff starting work at the school. No formal induction and training of the local board of governors has yet taken place. Proprietors monitor the school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety, but they had not paid sufficient attention to ensure the rigorous implementation of the recruitment process. Leadership and management are good and the school has made significant progress in many areas since the previous inspection. Teachers have been given the opportunity to observe each other and share best practice, but inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. The relationships and links with parents are excellent and the school works hard to seek the views of pupils. The school maintains very good lines of communications with parents and provides them with helpful information, including sufficiently detailed reports on pupils' progress.

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:
- ensure all references for staff are obtained prior to starting work at the school [Part 3, paragraph 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety of pupils].
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the quality of teaching through rigorous monitoring to ensure all teaching reflects the same high standards as the best;
 2. Develop the role, scope and expertise of the proprietors and local governing body in order to provide challenge and support to the school leadership at all levels, including the EYFS;
 3. Improve the use of pupil assessment data, particularly for the more able, to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged in lessons to reach their full potential.

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 good.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve well across a broad range of subjects and activities and become good learners. They are educated in accordance with the school's aim of helping all pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils are confident and articulate, and readily express their opinions in lessons. They reach exceptionally high standards in reading. Pupils achieve well in routine mathematical calculations and have the opportunity to construct their own tables and graphs from Year 3, illustrating the school's introduction of skills-based learning at this stage.
- 3.3 Pupils show creativity in their art and design work, as demonstrated in the high standard of work displayed around the school. They engage competently and enthusiastically in sport and other physical activities for which detailed programmes are in place. They use basic skills in ICT as a matter of course in ICT lessons and in their classwork. Pupils worked on a very effective computer presentation to produce a quiz to consolidate their learning on plants, involving the use of hyperlinks. Pupils showed that they think logically and work independently when they were asked to record, in their own words, the process of pollination and germination. They also worked effectively in pairs or in groups to study the effects of different weights on the tension and compression of springs.
- 3.4 Pupils sing well, especially in front of their peers in assemblies. Many pupils have individual tuition in a wide range of musical instruments, as well as speech and drama. They perform to a high standard, with a significant number passing with merit or distinction in examinations. Pupils represent the school in a wide variety of sports, and the school has a successful record in inter-school tournaments and matches, with particular success at the under-11 Independent Schools' Association (ISA) national finals and the ISA regional Kwik Cricket championships.
- 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 age 7 have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools. While results in writing have been above average, they were lower than in reading and mathematics, which have been well above average. Results have varied between cohorts, with reading in 2012 being exceptional. Results in national tests at age 11 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools, with results in 2013 being well above average. In 2014, all pupils in Year 6 were successful in gaining places at the senior schools of their first choice, including scholarships, exhibitions and awards to independent schools.
- 3.6 This level of attainment indicates that pupils make progress to age 7 that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, and that pupils make good progress to age 11. Pupils with SEND and EAL make good progress because of the careful attention teachers pay to their needs; this is shown by the improvement in their reading, spelling and writing. In most cases, the more able pupils are encouraged to work to their abilities in most lessons, but are not sufficiently challenged in some lessons and as a consequence do not always make the progress that they should, given their ability.

- 3.7 Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning, showing initiative and self-discipline. They have established good working habits and display enjoyment in learning. Pupils enjoy offering their own ideas to class discussions, take turns in speaking and listening to each other, and are keen to engage in the themes being discussed. These good working habits are established from an early age, including in the EYFS.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 Throughout the school pupils study a wide range of subjects and enjoy a rich variety of lessons containing a balance between practical and written subjects, with opportunities to undertake investigations and ask interesting questions. The curriculum is successful in meeting the school's aims of offering a broad and balanced education, which nurtures the creative, sporting, technical and social abilities of the individual. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs.
- 3.10 The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of French from the age of three. Setting by ability in mathematics in Years 1 to 6 and in English in Years 3 to 6 allows more challenging work to be set for some pupils. Currently the provision for pupils with SEND is sound and the school recognises the need to increase the amount of provision through effective recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff. Pupils with SEND have detailed educational plans, which are well implemented and monitored by class teachers, and those pupils who are withdrawn from lessons receive a tailored programme of literacy-based individual lessons. The school now identifies very able pupils but has not yet put into place a programme to specifically meet their needs.
- 3.11 Dedicated ICT lessons are taught from Reception, enabling pupils to develop specific skills, which they can apply to support their learning in a range of subjects. The use of ICT is a strength of the school, with the newly introduced tablet computers enabling pupils to engage in a very positive manner in cross-curricular work, for example when researching a history topic. The library is currently under-utilised by pupils in their class work and independent learning. The school is aware of this and the greater use of the library has been identified as a priority on its development plan. The programme of studies for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is comprehensive and encompasses topics that further the pupils' personal development, such as how to be a good friend.
- 3.12 The extra-curricular programme is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the range and accessibility of the extra-curricular programme has been developed further and this contributes towards pupils' enjoyment of school. A wide range of well-chosen activities, during lunchtime as well as after-school, enables pupils to further develop their intellectual, creative and physical skills, both inside and outside the classroom. The activities are well matched to the pupils' interests and needs and range from karate to robotics club. The school choir is particularly well supported by pupils, as are the range and numbers of sports clubs the pupils attend. Well-supported individual music lessons enable the curriculum to be enriched by a wide variety of formal and informal concerts. Pupils particularly enjoy participating in sporting competitions and speak openly about the benefit these have for pupils of all sporting abilities.
- 3.13 The curriculum is enriched by many visits to places such as local museums, farms and theatres. From Year 4, pupils have the opportunity to stay overnight away from

home on a residential visit. The school has good links with the local community, strengthened by singing and performing at local churches. Pupils are enthusiastic about their charity work and, through these links, gain an understanding of people less fortunate than themselves.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 The school's aim to care, challenge and inspire pupils is supported by teaching that encourages pupils to work to the best of their abilities within a happy, safe and stimulating environment. At its best, teaching is characterised by careful planning, succinct learning objectives and clear explanations, which create imaginative, stimulating, inspired and well-paced lessons. In these lessons, the use of targeted questioning and challenges enable all pupils to learn to their full potential. In a minority of lessons, pupils were given few opportunities for independent thinking and problem solving and the work set was not well-matched to the full range of abilities within the class. Since the previous inspection, the overall quality of teaching has improved, with most lessons being judged good or better.
- 3.16 The considerable subject knowledge, expertise and understanding of many teachers promote effective progress and good learning. In the majority of lessons, careful attention is given to ensuring that effective teaching strategies are used to support pupils' learning. Time management is generally excellent and lessons stimulate and encourage many aspects of pupils' intellectual, physical and creative development, for example, when carrying out investigations in science. Management of behaviour is good and contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Resources are well used, and interactive whiteboards, provided in every classroom, enhance much of the teaching and learning.
- 3.17 Pupils are given many opportunities to work collaboratively in class and there is a good balance between this and the encouragement to work independently. A significant feature of most lessons is the way pupils are encouraged to use their thinking and reasoning skills, for example, to explain how an advertisement uses persuasive techniques to engage the viewer to buy the product. This leads to pupils developing good oral as well as writing skills. Teachers are attentive and sensitive to those pupils who need extra help, planning their work on different levels and marking in greater detail. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to support and motivate pupils. Individual education plans are drawn up collaboratively by staff who teach pupils with SEND, with advice from specialist staff where appropriate. These plans have clear targets and are reviewed regularly to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and EAL, and pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The needs of the most able pupils are catered for in some lessons through well-targeted questioning, but on many occasions are not given work that is appropriate to their advanced abilities. Pupils feel well supported and able to seek advice with their work whenever necessary.
- 3.18 The marking of pupils' work is of inconsistent quality and in many cases does not follow the school's comprehensive marking policy, particularly for older pupils. At its best, marking contains encouraging comments, suggestions for improvement and identified next steps for pupils' future learning and progress. Data from regular assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is used to identify those who are achieving well in relation to their ability and those pupils requiring additional support. The use of this data is not yet sufficiently used to plan lessons.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- 4.2 The school is successful in developing pupils' personal qualities in line with its aims. Pupils are confident and self-aware. They readily engage in conversations with visitors to the school and are keen to ask questions and express their view on a wide range of topics. They have well-developed social skills, relate well to each other, showing consideration for adults and peers alike.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual awareness is good. Pupils derive benefit and gain understanding from assemblies held twice each week and reflect on the themes presented. As a result, they demonstrate a deeper understanding of areas such as friendship, the need to help others and the importance of teamwork. Pupils lead form assemblies in front of the entire school and invited parents. Pupils' understanding of religious practices is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors to the school, along with lessons in religious studies. The beliefs of the school's ethnically diverse pupil roll are reflected both in the religious education scheme of work and the cross-curricular links in the curriculum. Pupils develop their spiritual awareness through singing and music, in hymn practices as a school community and through concerts and shows performed to parents. For example, by learning songs to commemorate the First World War, pupils had the opportunity to reflect on the emotions of soldiers leaving home to fight in the trenches. Opportunities for stillness and reflection are limited within the school day, including during assemblies and form time. Pupils' awareness of the awe and wonder of the world around them is limited by missed opportunities in lessons.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. The school's behaviour code is well understood and pupils demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils have a strong moral awareness that reaches beyond the school gates. They speak sensitively about the need to address climate issues and are aware of people less fortunate than themselves. For example, the school council has been championing 'food bank Friday', where pupils bring in donations of food for a local community food bank.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is good. They are generally well-behaved around the school, they open doors for each other and adults, they say 'hello' and make visitors feel welcome. However, on occasions, pupils do not always demonstrate self-discipline during transitions between different parts of the school and at certain times of the day, for example when lining up at the end of playtime. Pupils relish the opportunity to take on extra responsibility in roles such as class monitors and librarians, which they carry out with enthusiasm, helping to enhance their social development. Pupils develop a growing understanding of British values and democracy through the school council, as well as visits to institutions such as the royal palaces and the Houses of Parliament. Pupils engage in fundraising for charities with commitment and enthusiasm.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They benefit from visits to the abundance of museums, art galleries, gardens and historic monuments accessible within the capital. These visits add a richness and texture to the pupils' understanding, which is built upon in the curriculum, such as the study of a range of artists in art lessons. Pupils in Year 5 experience the French culture first-hand

during a residential visit. Through their lives in school, pupils develop a relaxed approach to those of different nationalities and show understanding of cultures other than their own.

- 4.7 By the time pupils leave the school, they have a good standard of personal development and are well prepared as well-rounded individuals for the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.

4.9 Staff provide effective care and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims. Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves are very supportive and productive. Staff share information effectively about pupils both formally during briefings and informally throughout the school day to ensure high standards of care. Since the previous inspection, form time has been created in the timetable in the morning and at the end of each day. This time is sometimes used for pastoral support and guidance for pupils, but an inconsistent approach across the school means that not all pupils benefit from this dedicated pastoral time.

4.10 Pupils are encouraged to take regular exercise and live a healthy lifestyle. In addition to the numerous sporting after-school clubs, a school running club operates three mornings during the week, and this is well supported by pupils. Pupils are provided with a choice of healthy meals at lunchtime. However the lack of monitoring of the eating habits of some older pupils means that they do not always finish their meals before going out to play. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use lunchtime as an occasion for pupils to interact socially with adults and learn good table manners.

4.11 The school is successful in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. A minority of parents and pupils felt that the school did not deal effectively with bullying issues, but evidence from pupil interviews; discussions with staff and inspection of school records did not support these concerns. Pupils expressed confidence in their teachers and the leadership to deal with any cases of bullying quickly and effectively. Pupils appreciate the system of rewards, such as stickers and receiving a roll of honour, and they understand that the loss of privileges such as the removal of playtimes is a consequence of unacceptable behaviour.

4.12 The school employs effective methods to seek the views of pupils. In addition to a successful school council, pupils have the opportunity to speak with playground buddies and post concerns or comments in a concerns box placed near the foyer.

4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with disabilities.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 The school has a comprehensive collection of health and safety policies to ensure that the pupils are cared for appropriately and kept safe, and they are well implemented. Policies are regularly updated and provide excellent guidance for staff.
- 4.16 The safeguarding policy has regard to official guidance and has been reviewed by the school's safeguarding governor in readiness for the imminent annual review by the board of governors. However, the policy has not been fully implemented in the recent past, as the school failed to secure satisfactory references for some staff before they started work. The school had resolved these omissions by the end of the inspection.
- 4.17 The school has good procedures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, including the testing of electrical appliances. A comprehensive collection of risk assessments are in place for all aspects of school life, including those involving activities off site and use of the minibus.
- 4.18 An annual health and safety audit is carried out. Potential concerns are identified and remedial action to be carried out is efficiently implemented. All staff hold qualifications in first aid and the school has an appropriate medical room, with toilet and washing facilities, where sick children can receive attention. An accident book details all pupils who have had an accident and received care. The school notifies parents of pupils who have had a bump on the head.
- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored for the previous three years. The school office is immediately aware of any unexplained absences through the electronic registration system and these are followed up with phone calls within a suitable time frame.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 Since the previous inspection, a local board of advisory governors has been established. The proprietors and governing body provide adequate oversight of the school in line with its aims. The school's proprietor, CfBT, provides some aspects of governance centrally, such as financial oversight and performance management procedures. Governors and proprietors ensure that the school buildings are in a good general state of repair and the resources throughout the school provide suitably for the relevant areas of the curriculum. The school's senior leadership attend governors' meetings each term, as do other members of staff when appropriate.
- 5.3 The local governing body provides support and advice to the school's leadership. Members are enthusiastic and bring in expertise from a number of areas. The board is still in its infancy and this, together with a lack of a formal induction process and governor training, means the governors are not yet fully effective in exercising a monitoring role, or providing the support and challenge for the school's leadership. The local board of governors does not yet have clear terms of reference with regard to their responsibilities for oversight. They visit the school for termly meetings and receive reports from the leadership on a range of matters.
- 5.4 The school's proprietors suitably discharge their responsibilities for child protection, welfare and health and safety throughout the school. Policies and procedures are updated to reflect recent regulatory changes. The proprietors review the school's safeguarding arrangements annually in line with statutory requirements. However, the proprietors have not paid sufficient attention to ensure the rigorous implementation of the recruitment process.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.6 At all levels, members of the leadership team share a common vision for school improvement and this has brought about huge steps forward in all areas of the school's work and life. All staff promote the pupils' personal development in line with the school's aims to care, challenge and inspire. Updated policies have been written to cover every aspect of curriculum and non-curriculum areas. These new procedures, along with rewritten schemes of work and a new school development plan, are helping to raise standards in all areas of school life. Leadership and management are effective in setting priorities and work hard to ensure these are achieved over time. Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has been restructured and extended. Monitoring of the implementation of school policies as well as lesson observations is not yet given sufficient time and focus to ensure a consistent approach across the whole school.
- 5.7 Management at all levels is successful in developing and motivating staff to ensure they are suitably trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. All staff have

undergone appropriate pre-appointment and criminal records checks, although the receipt of satisfactory references had been delayed for some in the recent past; this was rectified by the end of the inspection. A clear commitment to professional development is evident, and staff are encouraged to attend courses, visit other schools and take advantage of local professional networks in their subjects. They benefit from a whole-school training programme that includes presentations from high-quality external speakers. Morale is high and the staff work effectively as a team. The school is not always successful in retaining high-quality staff and this sometimes affects the continuity and consistency of provision in teaching and management.

- 5.8 Subject leaders contribute effectively to the school development plan and secure improvements in their areas of the curriculum. Subject files include detailed planning, a guide to resources available for their subject, as well as notes on standards achieved within the subject. Much work has gone into developing this documentation. The school is effective at reviewing and evaluating its own work and in setting new targets for improvement and whole-school further development.
- 5.9 The school's leadership is dedicated and has worked hard to increase the number of opportunities parents have to play a part in the life of the school. The provision of information to parents has been very well developed since the previous inspection. The school has set up a parent council, designed new annual reports to parents and runs numerous curriculum and transition meetings to inform parents of how they might best support their child at school.
- 5.10 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of education and support that their children receive. A very small minority expressed concerns about the amount of information they receive about children's progress and the school's handling of concerns. However, the inspection evidence does not support these views. During discussions, parents felt that the school is highly successful in achieving its aim to provide an environment that cares, challenges and inspires.
- 5.11 Parents state that channels of communication have improved considerably and are now effective. The school is instigating a portal on the website to further enhance its communication systems. They greatly appreciate the school's 'open door' philosophy and all staff, including senior leaders, are very approachable and supportive. The school has a suitable complaints procedure and inspection of the records of concerns and complaints reveals that they are handled and resolved with sensitivity and care, within the published timescales.
- 5.12 The school strongly encourages parents to become involved in its life and to support the work and progress of their children. Communication diaries provide valuable links between home and school. The 'learning journey week' and 'sharing learning' occasions, which occur for pupils throughout the school, also enable very good opportunities for parents to informally peruse their children's workbooks. The school encourages parents to contribute their views and opinions in support of its future development, through channels such as parent council meetings, suggestion boxes or the periodic questionnaires that the charitable trust circulates. Parents are regularly invited to events such as family days, assemblies, concerts and dramatic productions. The school periodically organises curriculum workshops and transition meetings to help parents support their children's moves between educational phases. The parent-teacher association, The Oakfield Association of Friends,

frequently organises social occasions and fund-raising events, which make a significant contribution towards purchasing school resources, such as a school minibus and playground equipment.

- 5.13 The school's website provides prospective parents with a very good introduction to its aims and ethos. Current parents receive comprehensive documentation detailing school routines and curriculum provision. Termly newsletters covering all aspects of the school's life ensure that parents are well informed about events, pupils' learning experiences and achievements.
- 5.14 Parents receive clear and useful twice-yearly written reports about their children's work and progress. These celebrate pupils' achievements, comment on their progress and, in the best examples, clearly state future targets in learning. Formal parents' evenings are also held to enable them to discuss their children's learning and attainment during the year.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 6.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. The educational programmes thoroughly cover the seven areas of learning and provide excellent experiences, which enable all children to reach high levels of development for their ages. Children also benefit from specialist teaching in French, sports and music. Consequently, the setting is highly successful in achieving its aim to create a learning environment that fosters enquiry and excitement.
- 6.2 Staff are highly committed to providing the best education for children. They have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and develop. Assessment systems are comprehensive and clearly track children's progress. Individual education plans and specialist teaching supports children's individual needs, such as those with SEND or EAL, particularly well. Staff regularly observe children during their activities, which enables them to identify future learning targets. These assessments ensure that all children make at least good and often outstanding progress from their individual starting points, which helps to prepare them extremely well for their next stages in learning.
- 6.3 Staff plan a stimulating range of activities. These include a careful balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning experiences, which enable children to explore, and become investigative learners. Staff are skilful in engaging with children, providing support when they need it. They have high expectations and make excellent use of questioning to extend children's thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, as the youngest children used magnifying glasses to look at frogspawn, staff asked questions about their observations. Similarly, as older children experimented with different substances to make 'pirate's grog', staff encouraged them to predict which would dissolve easily in water and which would not.
- 6.4 The setting forms outstanding relationships with parents. Daily informal dialogue and communication booklets enable vital links between home and school, keeping parents extremely well informed about their children's welfare, progress and achievements. Parents are encouraged to share children's home achievements by completing 'wow moment' slips and provide feedback following formal assessments, such as progress reports. Pre-inspection questionnaire responses and discussions demonstrate parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the care and educational experiences that children receive.

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

- 6.5 The provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Children part happily from their parents and settle quickly into the setting's warm and friendly atmosphere. The key person system is deeply embedded in practice and every child has an adult who takes personal responsibility for their learning and development. Relationships are extremely strong; staff greet children with smiles and enthusiasm and children talk confidently to them about their recent home experiences, such as a family member's birthday party.

- 6.6 Children are happy and enjoy their time in the setting immensely. Resources are well organised, plentiful and provide exciting learning opportunities. As a result, children explore their surroundings confidently and make activity choices. The spacious outdoor area offers plenty of opportunity for children to play and explore, such as smelling herb leaves in the sensory garden and hunting for insects in the nature area. Classroom areas are vibrant and provide exciting opportunities for children's imaginative play, such as making a pirate ship from large constructional apparatus and preparing a rucksack for a pretend day out with a baby doll. Staff are excellent role models, and work closely together as a team. Children are keen to please and meet staff expectations, relishing responsibility roles such as being the class helper or line leader. Even the youngest children are highly independent in their own self-care routines, such as putting on their own aprons and footwear.
- 6.7 Children's behaviour is exemplary. They play co-operatively together, share toys and take turns. Staff make excellent use of positive praise and reward stickers to celebrate children's successes, which nurtures their self-esteem extremely well. Consequently, children are personally, socially and emotionally very well prepared for their transitions between classes.
- 6.8 Children's good health and well-being is given a high priority. Drinking water is readily available for children at all times and daily snacks and lunches are healthy, nutritional and well balanced. Children learn from an early age the importance of good hygiene, such as washing hands to keep germs at bay, and plenty of daily fresh air and exercise to keep fit.

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

- 6.9 The leadership and management of the early years is good. The governing body is enthusiastically supportive towards the EYFS, although their knowledge and understanding of the statutory framework and regulations is limited. However, senior leaders attend board meetings and keep governors informed about EYFS developments and regulatory compliance matters.
- 6.10 Senior leaders regularly scrutinise the quality of educational programmes to ensure equality of provision for all children. Excellent systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning, such as coaching and supervision sessions for all staff, helping to ensure the best educational experiences for children. The systems to review children's assessments enable thorough tracking of their progress. This ensures the provision of high quality support and challenge for their individual needs, such as those children with SEND, EAL or the more able.
- 6.11 A high priority is given to children's welfare. Comprehensive policies and procedures, together with regular update training for all staff, including for safeguarding, strongly promote an environment that is welcoming, safe and stimulating for children to enjoy. Staff are highly committed to providing the best quality care for children. Recruitment processes for new staff are generally rigorous and ensure that they are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, there have been failures to obtain references for some staff in the recent past. This was remedied by the end of the inspection.
- 6.12 Systems for self-evaluation are rigorous and contribute significantly towards setting challenging targets for future development. Staff meet regularly with senior leaders and managers to discuss the provision and identify areas for improvement. The views of parents are strongly welcomed and make a valuable contribution to

strategic planning. In response to the recommendations raised at the previous inspection, considerable improvements have been made to the outdoor area, and assessment systems have been developed to provide clear targets for children's future learning. Additionally, cloakroom and toilet areas have undergone a major refurbishment.

- 6.13 Appraisal and staff supervision meetings provide highly effective support for staff. Pertinent targets are set for future practice development, alongside opportunities for staff to further their professional practice through training. The strong partnerships with parents, alongside intervention from external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, ensure that children receive the support they need.

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

- 6.14 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are good. Children make significant progress from their starting points because of the excellent support and challenges that staff put in place for their individual needs, such as those with SEND or EAL or the more able. By the end of their time in the EYFS, the vast majority of children are achieving above national expectations. For example, children are highly articulate in contributing their views and ideas during class discussions. Younger children can write their own names, recognise and name the sounds of letters and are beginning to spell simple words. Older children read appropriate text fluently, write complex sentences and have a good understanding of simple punctuation. Even the youngest children count ably to five and recognise simple shapes, while older children understand double numbers and count confidently in multiples of two. These skills prepare children extremely well for their next stages in learning.
- 6.15 The personal and emotional development of all children is outstanding. They are happy, feel secure and enjoy the close, nurturing relationships that they have with the staff who care for them. Children approach their learning activities with confidence and enthusiasm. They play happily with their friends and their behaviour is impeccable. Children are self-assured and independent and greatly enjoy their school experiences.
- 6.16 The setting fulfils almost all of its regulatory obligations towards safeguarding children and ensuring their welfare. Staff have a strong commitment and understanding of their responsibilities towards protecting children and keeping them safe.
- 6.17 Leadership and management of the setting are strong. The systems for evaluating practice and the educational experiences for children, alongside a strong vision for continuous improvement, result in a provision that enhances the best possible outcomes for children.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.18 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those responsible for the registered provision must:
- ensure that references for all staff are obtained before starting work at the school.