



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
BLUNDELL'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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Blundell's Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Blundell's Preparatory School
DfE Number	878/6012
Registered Charity Number	1081249
Address	Blundell's Preparatory School Milestones House Blundells Road Tiverton Devon EX16 4NA
Telephone Number	01884 252393
Fax Number	01884 232333
Email Address	prep@blundells.org
Head Master	Mr Andrew Southgate
Chair of Governors	Mr Cedric Clapp
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	228
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (121 boys; 107 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 47 5-11: 181
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 228
Number of Boarders	Total: 0
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Diane Kimber
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	16 Jun 2015 to 19 Jun 2015

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 July 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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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.

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.

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 assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses 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

Ms Juliet Jaggs	Reporting Inspector
Mr Christopher Gatherer	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Linda Griffith	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mr Stephen Bailey	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Kathryn Henry	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Blundell's Preparatory School is located on the outskirts of the market town of Tiverton. The majority of pupils come from the town and surrounding villages and a small minority come from further afield in Exeter and Honiton. The school was founded as St Aubyn's School in 1929, with the purpose of educating boys in preparation for entrance to public schools. It formed a link with Blundell's School at that time, with boys frequently going on to the senior school. Various developments took place between 1947 and 2000, including the admission of girls. In 2000, St Aubyn's moved on to the Blundell's campus and into Milestones, formerly the Blundell's hospital and day boys' house. In 2006, the school changed its name to Blundell's Preparatory School. It is part of the Blundell's charitable trust, with its own governing committee that reports to the full governing body of the senior school. Financial and health and safety matters are organised centrally and managed by the head of the senior school. The head of the prep school reports to the head of the senior school on other matters.
- 1.2 Through the motto 'Non Sibi' ('Not for Ourselves'), the school aims for pupils to develop courtesy, selflessness and empathy for those in different social and cultural circumstances within the community. It sets out to give pupils opportunities to discover their interests and talents, to improve their skills and further their knowledge through a wide range of teaching approaches, and for them to be independent and creative in their learning. The school also seeks to create an atmosphere where all pupils, staff and parents treat each other with respect, and also respect the school environment.
- 1.3 There were 228 pupils attending the school at the time of the inspection, of whom 107 were girls and 121 were boys. The school consists of the Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep. There are 47 children who attend the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and most of those who attend the Nursery do so on a part-time basis. Pupils who join the school are of above average ability. Most are of white British origin and come from local families. The school has identified 41 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), providing specialist learning support to 23 of these pupils. A few children in the Nursery are learning English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 A new head master has been appointed since the previous inspection and the senior leadership team has been restructured to include academic leaders for the Prep and the Pre-Prep. The school was granted a permanent material change in July 2014, allowing it to take boarders in Years 5 and 6 as part of School House on the senior school campus. This house accommodates boarders in Years 7 and 8 and was visited as part of the inspection; there are currently no preparatory school boarders.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used from Year 1 and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The school refers to its Nursery groups as Nursery 1 and Nursery 2, and to Reception as Kindergarten.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school meets well its aims to promote the pupils' achievement and personal development in a caring environment. The pupils' achievement is good, their literacy and numeracy skills are accurate and they are well prepared for the move to senior school. A new initiative to develop outdoor learning, which successfully addresses the recommendation of the previous inspection, is beginning to give pupils, including children in the EYFS, more chances to learn through investigation in the school grounds. A good curriculum provides pupils with varied learning experiences, many of which are practical, and good teaching encourages pupils to be conscientious. Other recommendations made at the time of the previous inspection have been partially addressed. Academic leaders have recently implemented a new system to measure the pupils' achievement, and the needs of pupils with SEND are being identified more effectively as a result. This information on the needs of individual pupils is not readily available to all staff. As a result, occasionally teaching does not include the range of activities necessary to challenge all pupils, especially the more able, to make progress on to the next step in their learning.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They learn to feel valued and to value those around them because of the supportive nature of the school ethos. Pupils contribute to the school and wider community in many ways and support one another extremely well. Excellent arrangements for pastoral care mean that pupils behave well and bullying is extremely rare. Children in the EYFS develop a keen interest in the environment around them and they quickly take responsibility for their own development. The level of day-to-day care and expertise in the EYFS is excellent.
- 2.3 The governors' oversight and management of educational provision are effective in promoting pupils' achievement and personal development. However, governance is unsatisfactory overall because it has not given sufficient attention to its responsibilities to ensure that the school complies with regulatory requirements, including in boarding provision. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are unsatisfactory. Governors rely too heavily on reports from the school and do not have an independent view of its effectiveness. The leadership is forging closer ties with the senior school but in the process it has not safeguarded its own procedures. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because they do not operate the mechanisms necessary to ensure that all staff are held to account for fulfilling their roles and responsibilities effectively. The absence of a clear management structure for health and safety in particular, including in the EYFS, means that leadership has not implemented an effective risk assessment policy. High priority actions, including those identified in the fire risk assessment, have not been implemented. A lack of coherence in the first-aid policy means that suitable arrangements to notify parents about their children's treatment are not made. The development of boarding has not been considered sufficiently carefully in relation to the needs of preparatory school boarders. The school has not yet identified appropriate management structures to implement and monitor the required arrangements and policies with regard to these younger boarders. Weaknesses in the management of risk assessments means that high priority actions identified for the boarding house have also been overlooked.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by implementing all high priority actions identified in the fire risk assessment of the preparatory school site and the boarders' accommodation [Part 3, paragraph 12, under Welfare, health and safety, and National Minimum Standards 7.1, under Fire precautions and drills, and 13.8, under Management and development of boarding];
- update and implement the written risk assessment policy to ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted, in particular by including specific line management arrangements regarding the preparation, implementation and review of risk assessments, and staff training to use them, and monitor records of all risk assessments carried out and ensure that all action points arising from risk assessment in the school and the boarding house are implemented [Part 3, paragraphs 11., 16.(a) and (b), and for the same reason 7.(a) and (b), and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, and National Minimum Standards 5.1, under Boarding accommodation, 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, under Safety of boarders, 11, under Child Protection, and 13.7, 13.8 and 13.9, under Management and development of boarding];
- ensure that governance fulfils its responsibility to ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured, including in boarding [Part 5, paragraphs 25 and 30, under Premises and accommodation, and National Minimum Standard 13.1, under Management and development of boarding];
- ensure that leadership and those with management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge, sufficient to hold staff accountable for consistently meeting regulations and promote the well-being of pupils [Part 8, paragraphs 34.(1)(a), (b) and (c), under Quality of leadership and management of schools, and National Minimum Standards 13.2, 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5, under Management and development of boarding].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

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

1. Ensure consistent arrangements operate throughout the Prep and Pre-Prep to document communication with parents about the details of first aid administered to their children for any illness or injury.
2. Improve the level of objectivity in self-evaluation so that the impact of planned developments is measured more accurately.
3. Develop teachers' understanding and use of available data about pupils' academic achievement so that learning activities build on pupils' levels of attainment effectively.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 In the EYFS, children make appropriate progress from their starting points, including those with SEND or EAL, so that by the end of the Reception year most have achieved the majority of the Early Learning Goals and some are working beyond them. Most children are able to work independently when involved in both teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Older children in the Nursery are developing good speaking skills. For example, they were able to describe what happened when they found toy dinosaur eggs in the sandpit and speculate about how they came to be there. In Reception, children learn to use their knowledge of sounds, and they concentrated well to write short sentences independently about a book they have read together.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve well across a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activities. They are educated in accordance with the school's aim to help all children to fulfil their potential. Pupils are confident speakers and good listeners, and their work in literacy shows that they have a firm grasp of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Recent initiatives to improve reading standards are proving successful in helping all pupils to read fluently and expand their vocabulary. In mathematics, pupils repeatedly use good calculation skills and they understand how to read different measurements accurately. Although pupils are not always given opportunities to apply their skills in solving more complex mathematical problems, they use reasoning skills to make intelligent predictions in science. More able pupils respond quickly to appropriate challenges. They are well able to think analytically and explain their answers when encouraged to do so. Pupils with SEND grow in confidence because of the targeted support they receive. The nurturing environment of the learning success room enables them to talk through questions as they develop their understanding and this contributes to their good achievement.
- 3.4 Pupils show a capacity for independent thinking, and their creativity is evident in the high standard of art and design displayed around the school, as well as in their poetry. In information and communication technology, the pupils use intricate programming skills to create their own animation films. Pupils show great enthusiasm for sport; they are athletic and they try new techniques bravely. For example, pupils were keen to negotiate the box in gymnastics. This is matched by the success enjoyed by their many teams who compete successfully in a wide variety of sports and who have had success in qualifying for national finals or achieving unbeaten seasons. Pupils sing well, and with numerous opportunities to develop their music skills, a number of them are successful in music examinations. Pupils perform confidently in drama. They have a strong sense of the audience and show strong empathy in their acting. Results in drama examinations are consistently of a very high standard.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national norm but on the evidence available it is judged to be good. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. A number of pupils are successful in gaining academic, sports and arts scholarships to independent senior schools, whilst able mathematicians perform well in national mathematics challenges.

- 3.6 The pupils have a very good attitude to work and are very keen to contribute in class. They are enthusiastic learners and talk animatedly about self-initiated work they have done at home. Handwriting and presentation are good and pupils take pride in their work.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.8 A strong emphasis on creating a stimulating environment provides children in the EYFS with good opportunities to develop their skills. A recently introduced formal programme to help children learn their letters and the sounds they make is being used effectively to promote early reading. A recommendation of the previous inspection, to develop the use of the outdoor area in the EYFS, has been met successfully. This well-resourced area supports children's learning as they talk to one another about their learning discoveries. Routine arrangements to review children's development mean that the needs of those with SEND or EAL are identified early. A strong focus on their social interaction encourages them to grow in confidence and learn by exploring with their peers.
- 3.9 The school fulfils its aim of providing the pupils with a wide range of experiences. Much of the pupils' learning is through practical activities, with specialist teaching in several subjects to ensure sufficient rigour. An emphasis in outdoor learning is being developed throughout the school. There is still some variability in the extent to which staff plan activities that are as enjoyable as they are academically challenging. Overall, the pupils are beginning to benefit from learning in different ways by undertaking planned investigations in the school grounds, sometimes for a whole day, or investigating bushcraft. Curriculum routines promote the pupils' skill development well, such as the whole-school weekly reading sessions that enable improved standards in reading. Literacy zones in the classrooms promote pupils' speaking and listening skills positively and the most able writers are encouraged to develop their talents through competitions. The curriculum covers the requisite areas of learning. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme makes a strong contribution to pupils' self-awareness and their ability to think of others, in accordance with the school's motto. It promotes fundamental British values effectively.
- 3.10 Academic senior leaders work closely with subject leaders to ensure that each curriculum area provides suitable progression from the Pre-Prep into the Prep. Planning within the schemes of work has been developed to include more scope for challenging the most able pupils. Well-organised arrangements for pupils with SEND mean that these pupils receive effective individual support. Nevertheless, inconsistencies exist in the extent to which the curriculum sustains appropriate levels of support and challenge for all pupils.
- 3.11 Numerous links with the community enhance the curriculum. Visitors stimulate the pupils' interest. For example, a science week focus on birds was enhanced by a representative of a local falconry centre who brought birds of prey. Regular themed days such as the mathematics and Tudor days give pupils the opportunity to reinforce their knowledge and skills through continuous activities. On these occasions, pupils work together in different age groups and this does much to enhance their personal development.

- 3.12 The curriculum is enriched by purposeful educational visits that add much to the pupils' personal development by focusing on academic, non-academic and team-building pursuits. Opportunities for performance as soloists and in groups in music and drama are integral to the school year. A tailored adventure, leadership and service programme provides good opportunities for Year 6 pupils to undertake independent research as they prepare for the move to their senior schools.
- 3.13 The provision of extra-curricular activities is a strength of the school, in accordance with its aims to encourage all pupils to enjoy a diverse range of activity. A varied programme of clubs and coaching sessions provides a good balance of opportunities for pupils to develop their expertise, especially in sport. Other clubs are highly inclusive and well organised to give all pupils the opportunity to play a key role. Inspection evidence supported the views of most parents and the large majority of pupils who indicated in their responses to the questionnaires that the school provides a wide range of clubs.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 Staff in the EYFS have high expectations and place a strong emphasis on developing relationships so that all children are ready to learn. Teaching makes good use of regular observations to assess children's development and understanding in order to identify the next steps in their learning. Children with SEND or EAL are especially well supported. Skilled storytelling in the Nursery classes engages children and supports the development of their listening skills. Focused questioning by staff in adult-led activities enables children to give explanations, express their ideas and reflect on their learning. Teaching encourages children to collaborate, sharing good quality resources, although children engaged in self-chosen activities do not always receive sufficient skillful intervention by adults to move their learning forward. On a few occasions, adult-led activities are so tightly structured that children's contributions are not taken into account.
- 3.16 Pupils are well supported by enthusiastic teachers who have good subject knowledge. This expertise is used effectively to plan learning sequences and resources that support most pupils' good level of achievement. On the whole these activities follow on at a suitable pace, which sustains the pupils' progress as they build on their skills. Some imaginative teaching methods ensure that pupils consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Occasionally the over-prescriptive nature of some teaching and the accompanying materials limit opportunities for pupils to explore learning independently. Teaching incorporates good questioning techniques that help pupils to apply their learning and extend their ideas.
- 3.17 The relationship between teachers and pupils is one of mutual respect and meets a school aim, ensuring that pupils are treated with tolerance and understanding at all times. Classrooms are managed effectively to create a calm learning environment where pupils behave well and acknowledge a responsibility to be conscientious. Teaching gives pupils confidence because teachers know them extremely well and how best to motivate them individually. The strong rapport between pupils, teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils are happy to ask for guidance. In their response to the questionnaire a large majority of pupils agreed that their teachers help them to learn.

- 3.18 In response to a recommendation of the previous inspection, the school has implemented a tracking system to assess pupils' progress more accurately. Much information is available but the recommendation is only partially met because the data is not yet being used to its full advantage to ensure that all planning fully accounts for pupils' different levels of attainment. In the same way, planning shows a good awareness in principle of the different needs of pupils with SEND and those who are able and talented, the latter also a recommendation of the previous inspection. This knowledge is not consistently applied in the preparation of learning activities suited to individual needs in the classroom. Occasionally some pupils find it hard to begin tasks without support and more able pupils finish activities quickly when the tasks provided do not include the necessary level of intellectual challenge.
- 3.19 Marking is regular and supportive, ensuring that pupils know what they have done well. Commentary in some books refers to pupils' targets and these pupils have a good idea about how to improve their work but this is not consistent. Feedback provided in class enables pupils to address misconceptions and encourages them to support one another in evaluating their work as they learn. Homework is used effectively to support learning. In their questionnaire responses, a few pupils and a minority of parents expressed concern about the quantity of homework set. The inspection team looked at pupils' books and found that homework provides good opportunities for pupils to reinforce their basic skills. In discussion with inspectors, pupils talked enthusiastically about their project work completed at home. A recent decision to limit holiday work is appropriately reducing the volume of homework.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The personal and social development of children in the EYFS is excellent. They make a positive contribution to the setting by following instructions carefully, often helping to tidy up without being asked to do so. They develop good skills in preparation for their move into Year 1, talking to one another about their learning as they explore the outdoor area and collaborating well to investigate new ideas together. Children are confident when talking to adults and when answering questions. They are keen to make their own choices in learning, but these are not always acknowledged through teaching and they learn to accept these disappointments calmly.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Their high levels of self-esteem and generous approach enable them to be calm and communicative. Pupils consider that reading parables helps them to understand themselves and those around them. This is one of many activities where they understand links to the school motto and they are encouraged to think of others more than themselves. Pupils often reflect on the moving experiences provided by the school, such as planting poppies around a trench that they dug in the school grounds. They have an acute sense of self-awareness which supports some of them in their learning as they recognise how to cope calmly with the pressures of working to time in tests. Pupils appreciate non-materialistic aspects of life and were heard singing spontaneously in their free time.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. Having all contributed in the drawing up of their classroom charters, they share a commitment to upholding the pledges that they have made to one another as well as to the school rules. They understand the need for the law outside school. Pupils have an extremely clear perception of what is morally right and wrong. When asked to mark their own work, they carefully acknowledge the errors they have made, in part because they recognise that it is important for their teachers to know about their misconceptions. Pupils appreciate wider ethical issues and take a keen interest in environmental concerns. They respect one another and know that bullying is unacceptable under any circumstances.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. They wholeheartedly welcome positions of responsibility. The older pupils support younger pupils through various 'buddy' schemes, as well as by taking on roles as house captains, prefects and monitors. Pupils are proud to belong to the school community and they are committed to helping it to run efficiently. They show an early appreciation of democracy in voting for members of the school council, who represent the views of their peers. They are keen to benefit each other, and pupils in the Prep fully championed the new play pirate ship for pupils in the Pre-Prep. Pupils contribute significantly to charity fund raising, with many causes chosen by themselves, such as a local church, recognised national initiatives and international natural disasters, to which they are swift to respond. The PSHE programme gives pupils a good knowledge of public institutions and economic awareness.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They understand and respect different faiths, and the school ensures that they have equal appreciation of buildings of significance for all faiths. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are actively involved with the senior

school's initiative for understanding about different cultures, for example by providing gifts for children in Laos. Through the extra-curricular programme, pupils appreciate the full extent of Western cultural traditions in sport and the arts.

- 4.7 By the time the pupils leave the school they have an excellent standard of personal development, in line with the school's aims, and are thoroughly prepared for their move on to their chosen senior schools. The school actively promotes their understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils celebrate one another's uniqueness and defend the right of all individuals to have their own beliefs and values.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff in the EYFS support children extremely well. Children form secure and trusting relationships with their key workers as a result. Children are made aware of the importance of good hygiene and a high level of care is taken to ensure that they eat healthily. They learn how to dress sensibly when they go outside, depending on the weather. Good arrangements ensure that children understand the changes they face as they move to new classes at the beginning of the academic year.
- 4.10 Staff throughout the school know the pupils well and provide them with highly effective support. Changes in timetabling mean that Prep and Pre-Prep tutors now spend more time with their tutees. In particular, Year 6 pupils respond positively to the clear guidance they receive about moving on to senior school. Pupils are considerate of one another and they get on extremely well together. Inspection findings support the views of the majority of parents who indicated in response to the questionnaire that their children are happy and well cared for. Most pupils indicated that they too feel safe at school. They acknowledge that there is always someone to turn to, and in the Prep pupils use a 'worry box' in the secure knowledge that any issues will be dealt with as a priority.
- 4.11 The school promotes the pupils' healthy lifestyles. Meals are nutritious and all pupils participate in exercise through many forms of both formal and informal games.
- 4.12 The school actively promotes positive behaviour. Pastoral policies are implemented separately in the Prep and Pre-Prep. Thorough records of the age-appropriate rewards and sanctions system are kept and used to analyse trends and track issues. This enables emerging concerns to be dealt with appropriately. Pupils report that the system is clearly understood because awards and sanctions are distributed fairly. Pupils are extremely well motivated to achieve the much prized Non Sibi award in recognition of exceptional effort. The instigation of a kindness and tolerance policy has led to a significant reduction in the loss of privilege time. The expansion of the house system to include pupils in the Pre-Prep provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to interact with each other. The school implements suitable measures to guard against bullying. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare and they are confident that any allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with immediately.
- 4.13 Pupils have an opportunity to express their views through the school council and work towards common goals with the staff.
- 4.14 An appropriate accessibility plan has been operational for the last two years to prioritise meeting the needs of 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 unsatisfactory.
- 4.16 The school has a suitable fire safety policy and draws on the expertise of external consultants to review health and safety procedures, including conducting a fire risk assessment, and to service fire prevention appliances. Nevertheless, the school has failed to implement effective procedures to ensure that the high priority actions identified by these specialists are completed systematically. As a result, fire safety priorities have not been addressed in the boarding house and those relating to the Prep School have been overlooked or delayed for up to two years. Fire drills are conducted routinely and pupils evacuate buildings efficiently.
- 4.17 Appropriately qualified school personnel conduct routine checks, such as those for portable appliance electrical testing and fire alarms. The absence of clearly delineated responsibilities for risk assessments throughout the Prep School and the EYFS means that staff are not being held accountable for ensuring that suitable, necessary measures are implemented to limit the impact of any potential risk. Responsibility for fulfilling the actions stipulated in the Prep School site risk assessment is not defined, leading to a lack of clarity about the actions that have been addressed. Members of teaching staff, including those in the EYFS, complete their own risk assessment forms for educational activities but the school has not trained staff to ensure that risks are recognised, mitigated and communicated amongst staff.
- 4.18 The school is thorough in its other arrangements to safeguard pupils. All staff, including those in the EYFS, are trained appropriately, and the school communicates effectively with local agencies and health organisations, and in consultation with parents, to ensure the quality of support for any pupils who may be vulnerable. Recruitment checks are robust but a lack of co-ordination between the senior and preparatory schools has meant that these had not been recorded accurately on the single central register of appointments. This has now been rectified. Suitable systems ensure that pupils have safe access to the internet.
- 4.19 The accommodation for sick or injured pupils is comfortable and a good number of staff are trained in first aid. The school has not implemented a consistent and reliable system to record when parents are informed about injuries their children may sustain during the day or the treatment they have received.
- 4.20 The admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.21 The preparatory school does not yet have boarders and so it is not possible to comment on the outcomes for boarders. However, provision and care planned for boarders in Years 5 and 6 are unsatisfactory.
- 4.22 Preparatory school boarders are to be accommodated in School House, located on the senior school campus. Inspection found that checks are not sufficiently robust to ensure that the risks identified in general risk assessments are attended to effectively. The school undertakes a fire risk assessment with respect to the boarding house and the sanatorium, but was unable to demonstrate through systematic records that all high risk action points resulting from this assessment have been implemented. Staff carry out fire drills at appropriate times and intervals. Boarding staff record the nature of all planned and unplanned evacuations and examine any issues arising from these events.
- 4.23 A suitable guide and induction programme are in place for new boarders. An effective system promotes their physical and mental health while they are at school. Existing arrangements for current boarders in School House, to which it is intended that new boarders in Years 5 and 6 will have access, include suitable accommodation when they are unwell. Full-time qualified nurses staff the school's sanatorium from Monday to Saturday and a nurse is on call at all other times. Currently, boarders have direct access to a local surgery for immediate non-emergency requirements and doctors visit the school. Medical and boarding staff make all external medical appointments. The boarding house operates a robust system for storing and dispensing medication.
- 4.24 The school has existing excellent facilities for the provision and preparation of food. Recent appointments have led to significant developments in the quality of menus. Arrangements for boarders to have access to house provisions ensure that they can prepare snacks in the boarding house outside of meal times.
- 4.25 An exciting range of activities is available to current boarders during the evenings and at the weekend, and it is planned that boarders in Years 5 and 6 will participate in these. The staff are experienced in ensuring that each activity is suited to the age and needs of the boarders who attend. Recent activities have included trips to adventure and games parks. The boarding house is well equipped with games and recreation rooms as well as an artificial pitch, which is very popular with boarders. Daily newspapers and appropriate access to the internet and to television are available.
- 4.26 The boarding accommodation is very comfortable and separate provision is made for boys and girls. The furniture and decoration of the house are of a high standard and the existing senior boarders take great care in decorating their own areas. House staff encourage boarders to be clean and tidy, and hold weekly competitions to ensure that they maintain high standards. Laundry facilities and provision of lockable storage are suitable. Boarders have every opportunity to contact parents by mobile telephones or landline, and through the internet. The house staff operate a policy of collecting tablet computers, telephones and laptops in the evening.
- 4.27 Existing boarding policies are robust but are specific only to the needs of older boarders, and the needs of prospective preparatory school boarders have not yet been provided for appropriately.

- 4.28 The school has good procedures in place with respect to other aspects of safeguarding and child protection. All boarding staff undertake regular training provided by the school's designated safeguarding officer with responsibility for boarding. All staff recruitment checks have been undertaken for boarding staff and, where appropriate in School House, suitable arrangements are implemented to check resident adults not in the employ of the school. Sufficiently experienced and trained staff are on duty at all times.
- 4.29 The school has clear and consistent policies to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying amongst existing boarders. These are implemented effectively. Approaches suitable for preparatory school boarders in Years 5 and 6 have not yet been considered.
- 4.30 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding provision is unsatisfactory. Governance and leadership have not made effective decisions in all areas in preparation for the arrival of preparatory school boarders. A lack of clarity in the strategic development of boarding means that no clear lines of accountability have been established; planning lacks coherence and does not fully consider the needs of these younger boarders.
- 4.31 The monitoring of the leadership and management of the boarding and welfare provision currently in the school has not effectively ensured that all aspects of the health and safety of boarders are secure. As a consequence, some regulatory requirements are not met, and necessary adjustments required to meet others once boarders in Years 5 and 6 are admitted have not been identified and implemented. This undermines the school's promotion of the well-being and safety of boarders. The school has not maintained and followed lists of records for risk assessments or monitored action taken in response to all risk assessments.
- 4.32 The school has recently designed a management structure and systems in order to mitigate the issues identified during the inspection. These remain to be implemented and embedded into practice.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 Governance shows a limited understanding of the applicable regulatory requirements. The Health and Safety Committee is attended by members of the governing body who report back to the full board on health and safety matters, but monitoring of procedures and implementation has failed to ensure that the school complies with relevant health and safety laws and with requirements to ensure fire safety.
- 5.3 Governance takes an interest in the quality of education provided by the school, including in the EYFS. Through routine termly visits, members of the governing body meet the staff and pupils in their support of the school fulfilling its educational aims. Governance does not challenge the further development of the education provision because it has not established an independent view of the quality of education and of its relative strengths, though it has promoted the strategic development of the school to include boarding.
- 5.4 Governors exercise careful financial management of the school and much of their activity is focused on resourcing the school to a high standard. Governors are aware of their responsibility to safeguard the welfare of pupils and discharge their responsibilities to the school's management. School leaders support the governing body in the annual review of safeguarding and child protection procedures. The governors have the qualifications necessary to conduct the review with the full agreement of the Prep School committee. Recruitment procedures are thorough although governance has not been effective in ensuring these checks are recorded accurately in the single central register of appointments.

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, is unsatisfactory.
- 5.6 The school is successful in achieving its aims to promote the pupils' personal development, achievement and pastoral care. However, leadership has relied too heavily on the involvement of the senior school in managing health and safety arrangements and has not paid sufficient attention to ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements in the Prep School. Senior leaders have not ensured that all staff are suitably trained and understand their role in fulfilling their health and safety obligations. Good links are established with the local safeguarding children's board, so that those with responsibility for safeguarding are well informed. Staff are suitably trained to fulfil their safeguarding duties, although oversight of the single central register of appointments is ineffective.
- 5.7 Management arrangements do not provide clear accountability for policy implementation and effective means of monitoring all staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. This leads to considerable variation in practice. Co-ordination of leadership between the Pre-Prep and the Prep do not result in effective collaboration. The school has different expectations about the manner in which

parents are informed about pupils' medical treatment and too much is left to spoken rather than written communication. Monitoring is insufficient to ensure that relevant information is given consistently. Leadership with responsibility for pastoral care rigorously monitors information about pupils' behaviour and attendance in the Prep School. This identifies those pupils facing difficulties and timely support is provided. The more informal approach in the Pre-Prep means that there are few systematic arrangements to ensure a whole-school approach to identify potential individual or group concerns regarding pupils' well-being.

- 5.8 A lack of clarity in the management of health and safety requirements means that the overall leadership and management of the EYFS are unsatisfactory. The shared responsibility between senior leaders in the EYFS and the Pre-Prep for meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS has led to some confusion about monitoring the consistent implementation of risk assessments. Priorities for improvement in the EYFS have been identified but they are not all fully embedded. Data is collected during each child's first term to identify expected development at particular points. However, this is not collated to give an objective judgement about each child's attainment on entry compared with data from previous years or against national expectations. Staff in the EYFS undertake a good range of training to ensure that they meet the children's learning and welfare needs, and training in safeguarding, child protection and first aid is up to date. Good systems for staff appraisal and supervision are in place. Progress in educational areas since the previous inspection has been good. Curriculum planning for the outdoors is extensive and of good quality and reflects teachers' awareness of the needs of different groups of children.
- 5.9 The school has developed the role of academic leaders effectively, to meet the recommendation of the previous inspection. Effective collaboration ensures that responsibility is shared effectively for implementing tracking systems to monitor pupils' academic achievement and for improving the quality of teaching, although practice in these areas is not yet of a consistently high standard throughout the school. The school has also developed the role of outdoor learning champions through various training opportunities, although these have not yet had the time to make their full impact. Thorough arrangements are in place to provide additional support for pupils with SEND but monitoring does not ensure that information is shared consistently with all staff and that teaching always reflects the specific needs of individual pupils.
- 5.10 Staff are fully committed to the school community. The school's supportive and caring ethos is manifested within an informal atmosphere. A new system of peer review has been introduced, giving staff the opportunity to observe practice in other areas of the school. The expectations for this process are not clearly identified, limiting its impact, particularly on the effectiveness of teaching and curriculum implementation. Methods to ensure consistently high standards in teaching beyond annual appraisal are few. As a result, leaders are not sufficiently aware of the inconsistencies that exist and self-evaluation is unrealistic. This inhibits the accurate identification of relevant priorities for improvement. Comprehensive development plans have been produced but these lack sufficient emphasis on the outcomes for pupils envisaged through specific developments and effective criteria to measure their success.
- 5.11 Parents are extremely satisfied with the quality of the education their children receive, which meets the school's aim to ensure that parents are fully involved in supporting pupils and the community as a whole. A welcome meeting at the

beginning of each year means that parents and pupils are well prepared to make the adjustment into a new class. Parents have many opportunities to be actively involved, attending assemblies, sports fixtures and other events. The parents of pupils with SEND or EAL, including those in the EYFS, are made fully aware of their children's targets and they work effectively in partnership with the school as these pupils seek to meet them.

- 5.12 Parents are well informed about the school because it communicates the required information in various different ways. The fortnightly newsletter keeps parents up to date with school arrangements and the termly review provides them with a colourful record of all that the pupils have done. Reports on pupils' progress are frequent and provide parents with valuable information about their children's skill development, although there is some inconsistency in the level of detail included. Suitable procedures to handle complaints are in place and parents' concerns are dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- 5.13 The parents of children in the EYFS form strong partnerships with the setting because staff are very accessible. Parents are encouraged to help their children settle into the Nursery each morning, enabling the children to grow in confidence and quickly adjust to school. The setting has effective links with external agencies which ensure successful interventions as necessary.

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