



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Michael's Church of England Preparatory School

Full Name of School	St Michael's Church of England Preparatory School
DfE Number	882/6000
Registered Charity Number	280688
Address	St Michael's Church of England Preparatory School 198 Hadleigh Road Leigh-on-Sea Essex SS9 2LP
Telephone Number	01702 478719
Fax Number	01702 710183
Email Address	head@stmichaelsschool.com
Head	Mr Steve Tompkins
Chair of Governors	Mrs Jane Attwell
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	294
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (139 boys; 155 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 70 5-11: 224
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Kate Perry
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	09 Jun 2015 to 12 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 October 2009.

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.

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 Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mr Nathan Close	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Helen Higginson	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Miss Lucy Sumner	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Michael's Church of England Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from three to eleven years. Situated in a residential area of Leigh-on-Sea, it was founded in 1922 by an order of nuns. Since 1970 it has been held in trust by the Diocese of Chelmsford. The governing body has traditionally been chaired by the local vicar, but the school now has its second lay chair. The school has its own chapel and the education it provides is founded on Christian principles and practice. Pupils of other faiths are welcome and they and their parents are asked to support the ethos of the school.
- 1.2 The school aspires to excellence in all that it undertakes, and aims to provide all of its pupils with a first-class education and to instil in them a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. It seeks to inspire and support all pupils to fulfil their potential and develop their talents, confidence, self-esteem, independence and integrity. Other stated aims are the promotion of a culture of care, respect and traditional values, and the development of pupils' spiritual awareness and a growing understanding of the beliefs of others, with the intention of laying the foundations of a happy and successful life.
- 1.3 There are 294 pupils in the school: 139 boys and 155 girls. Of these, 70 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils come mostly from professional and business families in the locality, and they represent a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) number 16, of whom 2 receive specialist support. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and it provides support to all of them. Two pupils have a formal statement of special educational needs.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Most pupils have at least above average ability, with over a third having well above average ability; few pupils have ability that is less than above average.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 In fulfilment of its stated aims, the school is successful in achieving overall excellence in all inspected aspects of its provision, including the EYFS. The pupils' positive approach to their studies and teaching of high quality are reflected in their good progress and significant academic achievement, including strong performances in National Curriculum tests and in entry examinations to maintained and independent senior schools. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge and understanding of their syllabuses. The school has met the recommendation of the previous ISI inspection, namely that the pupils should develop the habit of working more independently. Teaching is excellent, and most, though not all, of the marking is regular and helpful. Pupils' academic progress is monitored by increasingly systematic and productive procedures. In the EYFS, effective but informal procedures are used to assess and analyse information about children's ability and progress. Pupils with SEND or EAL are very well catered for, as are the ablest. Pupils attain a conspicuously high standard in orchestral playing, choral music and drama, with sporting and other successes regularly achieved. The broad overall provision enriches the pupils' educational and personal experience, enabling them to develop their talents happily and fruitfully.
- 2.2 The school achieves high standards in all that it undertakes, with pastoral care at the heart of its mission. The caring and supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. Parents commend the pupils' excellent behaviour, and inspection evidence fully supported this judgement. The quality of pupils' personal development owes much to the 'family' atmosphere of the school's close community, in which the pupils are very well known to the staff, who respond readily to their needs and interests. Proud of their school, the pupils grow strongly in self-confidence and self-esteem. They feel a strong sense of belonging to a place where they say that they feel very happy and safe. The older pupils benefit from the many opportunities available for leadership and service, and when they come to leave they are ready for the next stage in their lives and education.
- 2.3 That the school's aims are being successfully realised is a strong testimony to excellent governance, leadership and management. The commitment of the governors is wholehearted and they exercise excellent oversight. Together with senior management, they are self-critical and forward thinking. Leadership combines calmness and care with energy and ambition. Meticulous attention to detail characterises the efficient and effective day-to-day management of the school, including robust safeguarding arrangements. The academic and support staff are highly committed to the well-being of the pupils and the good of the school as a whole. They receive all of the required training in safeguarding and child protection, although an attendance record is not made of all of the training courses that they undertake. The school enjoys very good relations with parents, who express great satisfaction with its leadership and management and with their children's education.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that a record is kept of attendance at whole-staff training sessions, so that the content can be communicated subsequently to all absentees.
2. Ensure that the marking policy is fully implemented, to achieve a uniformly high standard in the marking of pupils' work.
3. In the EYFS, adopt a more systematic procedure for the assessment and analysis of information about children's ability and progress.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 All children in the EYFS, including those with SEND or EAL, make good and often rapid progress and achieve an excellent standard in their learning and personal development relative to their starting points. All children are very well supported in the acquisition and development of communication and language skills. As a result, they are articulate and able to express themselves very clearly, according to their age and developmental stage. Children of all ages can access programs on the computer and use the interactive whiteboards independently. The children are active learners who rise to the challenges they are set. They enjoy exploring and investigating their surroundings, following their interests, using their imaginations and developing their own ideas.
- 3.3 The youngest children can recognise their names and know simple phonic sounds. They write and make marks independently, using some recognisable letters, numbers and symbols, and are able to say what their marks mean. Children can create and continue repeated patterns, and recognise the symmetry in butterfly markings. They are able to count to ten and introduce themselves in French. During a practice for sports day races, they showed good co-ordination and self-control. In Reception, children write independently in a variety of contexts, for example postcard messages from imaginary destinations. The more able children write lengthy stories and accounts, using simple punctuation and making feasible attempts to spell unfamiliar words. Children are able to form many letters correctly. Most children can read, some with confidence and fluency. They can count and sequence numbers up to and beyond 20 and complete simple calculations. They know the sequence of the days of the week and can recognise a rhyming story.
- 3.4 The all-round achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is excellent, in accordance with the school's stated aims. They display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their academic syllabuses. At every stage, the pupils are articulate and demonstrate a high standard of literacy and numeracy. Pupils' contributions in class and on paper confirm their very good general level of logical thought and analytical ability. Their creativity, particularly in the arts, is of a high standard, they are proficient in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and they display good physical ability. Almost all of the Year 6 leavers proceed to their first-choice schools, with a strong record of entry into selective maintained grammar and independent schools.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for 2012 to 2014: these are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools, with mathematics results at the age of 11 being exceptional in 2013. Results in standardised tests of attainment indicate that pupils' performance in English and mathematics is higher than national norms. The level of attainment in national tests indicates that pupils make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Analysis of these results shows that the overall achievement of the girls and the boys is similar, with the girls slightly outperforming the boys in writing. Specialist support contributes to the good progress made by pupils with SEND or EAL; in some cases their academic performance by Year 6 is broadly comparable with that of their contemporaries, but

more often it is lower, although still good in relation to their ability. Evidence for the level of pupils' progress includes lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and examination of standardised measures of progress. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils agreed that they are making good academic progress, and the overwhelming majority of parents stated that they were pleased with the progress being made by their children.

- 3.6 The quality of performance of the orchestra, comprising over thirty pupils and well represented in all four sections, is outstanding. Large numbers of pupils achieve success in practical music and music theory tests, and in speech and drama examinations. Choral singing and drama are strengths of the extra-curricular programme, with many pupils performing with confidence and flair. Honours have been won at borough level in hockey, athletics and rugby.
- 3.7 Throughout, pupils display an excellent attitude to learning, in fulfilment of the school's aims. They say that they find the work interesting, and they apply themselves with evident enjoyment, keen to succeed and eager to be challenged. Enthusiastic participants in their lessons, they are readily responsive, offering answers and opinions articulately and confidently. Their behaviour in class is exemplary. They work conscientiously, displaying perseverance and determination. When working in pairs or groups, they co-operate very well. They produce a good volume of work that is extremely neatly presented, reflecting pride and care. Pupils participate in extra-curricular activities in a similarly spirited and enthusiastic way.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, educational programmes for all areas of learning are suitably varied according to individual children's and groups' needs, providing a high level of challenge and interest. Children across the setting benefit from being taught music, French and physical education by specialist teachers. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of interesting trips and visitors to the school, such as parents, authors and nurses, as well as the storytelling club and speech and drama lessons for children in Reception.
- 3.10 Children with SEND or EAL, or those who are particularly able, are identified early, closely monitored and sensitively supported. Consequently, all children make good and often excellent progress from their varied starting points and attain a level of development typical for their age, with many exceeding this. They are thus very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.11 The academic curriculum in Years 1 to 6 provides effective coverage of all the requisite areas of learning. It is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs, and accords with the aims of the school to provide a curriculum that promotes excellence in achievement and thoroughly prepares pupils for the move to their senior schools. While there is a central emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics, the creative subjects of music, drama, art and design and technology are all strongly represented within the curriculum, and all pupils learn French. The school makes good provision for physical activities. The pupils' ICT skills are effectively used across the curriculum and have been enhanced by the introduction of programming.
- 3.12 The curriculum has benefited from an extensive review and is supported by a wide range of visits and trips to support the pupils' learning and broaden their horizons. Residential visits to the Isle of Wight and France help to develop pupils' confidence

and independence, and the outdoor challenge programme enables them to build self-esteem as well as fostering co-operation and leadership skills, in line with the school's aims. These attributes are further developed by a well-planned personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) course, which also actively promotes a knowledge and understanding of British values. The wide variety of activities, trips and visits is celebrated in attractive and informative displays around the school.

- 3.13 Setting in core subjects from Year 3 enables the ablest pupils to work at an accelerated pace. Furthermore, they benefit from opportunities to take part in a variety of academic, musical and sporting extension activities at local schools; the school organises a problem-solving day where selected pupils tackle challenges such as making a golf ball roll uphill. Excellent provision by a well-organised learning support department enables pupils with SEND to make good progress relative to their ability; their needs are identified as early as possible and detailed plans are produced to meet their individual requirements. The plans are used by teachers and classroom assistants to support pupils in their learning, whether in class, individually or in small groups.
- 3.14 An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is available to pupils, including sporting, music and drama clubs, a well-established gardening club, which provides attractive floral displays around the school, and a t'ai chi group. Teams have successfully represented the school in a variety of sporting activities in local competitions. Many pupils have achieved music and drama awards, and the school choir and orchestra have performed at a number of venues. Very successful fund-raising events for a number of charities have been organised by pupils, who have developed a strong link with a local lifeboat station. As an element of their PSHEE programme, Year 6 pupils undertake an entrepreneurial challenge to create and market products to sell and raise money for their chosen charity, a hospital for sick children, thus enabling them to use their initiative and gain some early economic understanding of trade.
- 3.15 All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities offered.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 Well-qualified and very experienced staff in the EYFS have extensive knowledge and a secure understanding of how to motivate and promote the learning and development of young children and of what they can achieve, based on high but realistic expectations. They have skilfully created an environment which provides much opportunity for active learning and in which children can achieve extremely well. An excellent range of easily accessible, age-appropriate resources enables children to develop their skills effectively. Creative use of the various outdoor spaces available ensures that children gain daily access to planned outdoor activities, which complement the indoor provision and give them opportunities for some larger-scale exploration and play in the fresh air. The arrangements for observation and assessment are effective, enabling staff to ensure that individual children's needs are fully met, but lack a sufficiently systematic structure to benefit new or temporary staff.
- 3.18 High quality teaching in Years 1 to 6 meets the school's aim to provide all pupils with a first-class education and instil in them a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. Well-planned lessons have clear objectives and take account of the needs of all pupils. Teachers' excellent knowledge, together with their enthusiastic teaching, challenging questioning and stimulating activities, enables pupils to make good progress. Working together in pairs and groups, pupils collaborate very well and constructively develop their ideas and skills. The pace of lessons is brisk and all subjects are very well resourced, with effective use of ICT enhancing teaching. The library also provides a valuable resource. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and have excellent relationships with them; pupils say that they are confident to ask teachers for help and that it is readily given.
- 3.19 The effectiveness of the action taken to address the recommendation of the previous inspection for the school to develop opportunities for individual and independent learning is borne out by the evidence of this inspection and the response to the questionnaires from pupils; the overwhelming majority said that they are encouraged to think for themselves and work independently. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.
- 3.20 Teachers work collaboratively to provide engaging lessons that foster interest and develop independence. Specialist teaching in music, physical education and French enhances learning, and the pupils' use of ICT is integrated into many lessons. Pupils are placed in sets for English and mathematics from Year 3, which provides effective support and work at an appropriate level for those with SEND and the few with limited English, as well as extension work and challenge for the most able pupils. Parental views expressed in their questionnaire responses showed the very great majority agreeing that the ablest pupils receive appropriate support, and parents were similarly complimentary about support for pupils with SEND. Teachers have a clear knowledge of the standards that pupils are required to reach to gain places at their chosen senior schools and meet these needs successfully.
- 3.21 The best marking is outstanding: regular, clear and constructive. Not all of the pupils' work is marked to the same high standard. Pupils are encouraged to respond to the marking and they say that they find the feedback and success criteria particularly helpful in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. They benefit from assessing their own successes through reflecting on their work at the end of each

week before setting themselves a target for the following week. Their achievements are recorded in order to track progress, and the present programme is being developed to include more systematic monitoring and target setting, and consequently more effective use of assessment to inform the planning of teaching to meet the needs of all pupils.

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 Children in the EYFS are secure, engage happily in their learning and follow classroom routines with ease. They enjoy being given responsibilities, for example to return the register to the office and to assist in taking the afternoon register. They participate willingly in activities and work and play together co-operatively. Staff encourage children to take turns and, as a result, they play harmoniously with each other and understand the need to share. Children show respect for one another. For example, those in Reception listened very attentively to others as they talked about special items brought from home. High standards of courtesy are consistently and effectively promoted. Staff place a very high priority on the promotion of independence, and children are encouraged to try to do things for themselves or to ask a friend for help. Children are able to organise themselves and their belongings on arrival at school.
- 4.3 Staff work closely with all parents and children to ensure that smooth transitions take place at each point of transfer. They create opportunities for parents, children, staff and representatives from previous settings to meet before children enter the school. A systematic approach to introducing the children to their new environments and teachers and a thorough handover of information and records ensure that the children move with confidence from one stage to the next.
- 4.4 In Years 1 to 6, the school meets its aim to develop pupils' confidence, self-esteem and spiritual awareness within a Christian framework. The school actively promotes within pupils an awareness and concern for fundamental British values. They exhibit considerable maturity, self-knowledge and a sense of self-worth, responding very well to the school's focus on developing them as individuals. Pupils display sensitive understanding and respect for their own and others' beliefs. Emotionally mature for their age, they are alert to the needs of others and they state that there is no inappropriate discrimination in the school. All pupils benefit from opportunities to think about non-material aspects of life, for example through activities such as singing and in their art, and they express a natural and easy sense of wonder at the world around them. They are reflective and self-critical, developing these qualities through discussion of their written work and performances. During the inspection, spiritually uplifting assemblies, singing and instrumental playing were beneficial to participants and listeners alike. At assemblies in the chapel and elsewhere, pupils take seriously the opportunity and encouragement to think about their own faith.
- 4.5 Pupils show excellent moral awareness. They have a well-developed understanding of the difference between right and wrong. In their PSHEE lessons and during assemblies the older pupils show that they recognise their individual liberty, and so accept full responsibility for their behaviour. The pupils are tolerant and respectful, of themselves, others and the rule of law. They are courteous, conducting themselves exceptionally well both during lessons and around the school. Moral and ethical awareness is also promoted through their charitable giving, where they show great consideration for people less fortunate than themselves, for example in helping to initiate a charitable response to the Nepalese earthquake.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent. The school succeeds in its aim to foster a culture of respect and traditional values. Pupils of all ages relish the opportunity to

hold positions of increasing responsibility, for example to become play leaders, sacristans, 'reading buddies' or school council representatives. They are elected to some of these positions, which enables them to develop an understanding of and respect for democratic principles. Those who succeed discharge their duties conscientiously and with tact. In particular, older pupils develop a sense of personal responsibility and pride as they take on leadership roles, as, for example, prefects and head boy or head girl, or by looking after the younger children.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils of many cultural backgrounds live and work together entirely harmoniously. They are well versed in Western cultural traditions, for example learning the importance of tolerance and mutual respect for those of other faiths and traditions through the diversity of the school community, which strongly encourages such values. This is further supported by assemblies which celebrate not only the Christian festivals, but also those of other cultures. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of British institutions and culture; moreover, they learn in their history lessons and through the PSHEE programme about the nature and origins of the civil and criminal law in England and the democratic processes of Parliament.
- 4.8 Pupils are articulate, polite and happy. By the time they leave, they exhibit excellent personal development: they are caring, considerate and self-aware individuals with a clear sense of their place in the world, their value and the value of others.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, children of all ages form appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments to their 'key person' and other staff. Highly dedicated and caring adults work to ensure that all children are happy and confident. Children feel safe in school. They are able to say which adults they can speak to if they are upset or worried, safe in the knowledge that they will support and help them. Behaviour is managed very well and is often exemplary. Excellent use of praise and encouragement, together with a wide range of rewards and stickers, effectively boosts children's self-esteem. They have the confidence to interact happily and freely with each other and with adults as they work and play. Adults support children to develop an understanding of the importance of eating healthily; for example, Reception children are able to explain why vegetables are essential to diet. There are many opportunities for the children to be physically active during adult-led sessions and daily outdoor play. Older children express that exercise is important in achieving a healthy lifestyle. Children learn about hygiene through daily routines, such as washing their hands before eating, and understand its importance.
- 4.11 Arrangements for the pastoral care of pupils in Years 1 to 6 are highly successful and make a significant contribution to their personal development, reflecting the school's aim to promote a culture of care. Members of staff, under guidance from the newly appointed pastoral director, serve as excellent role models and give pupils extremely effective support. Much attention is devoted to resolving any difficult issues with patience and understanding. Observations and interviews during the inspection demonstrated that relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent.
- 4.12 Pupils enjoy a healthy lifestyle through the many opportunities they have for exercise. The parents' association has funded additional large play equipment to

promote play, exercise, physical development and social interaction. Positive encouragement is given to healthy eating, including pupils' own packed lunches.

- 4.13 In their responses to the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils said that the school does not deal with incidents of bullying. Evidence from the inspection, however, indicated that the rare instances of bullying have been dealt with promptly and fairly. The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment are highly effective, and pupils clearly understand what they should do if they have concerns. In discussions with pupils, they all recognised that rewards and sanctions are an integral part of the structure of pastoral care, and that they themselves are responsible for their own actions. In contrast to the opinions of a few pupil respondents to the questionnaire, those interviewed felt that rewards and sanctions are meted out fairly. During the inspection it was observed that a culture of positive praise pervades the school.
- 4.14 The school employs effective methods to seek the views of pupils. The recently established school council has made constructive proposals and its members are pleased that their opinions are taken seriously by senior management. Suggestion boxes are also provided, and staff are always available to listen sympathetically to pupils' views.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are seen as being of paramount importance. Highly effective, they cover all aspects of the life of the school, including the EYFS. In questionnaire responses an overwhelming majority of parents said that their children are happy and feel safe at the school. The detailed policies comply with regulatory requirements. Clear procedures for safeguarding children and eliminating discrimination are effectively implemented. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection at the prescribed intervals.
- 4.18 The welfare of individual pupils is raised at regular meetings of senior management, the staff and the pastoral committee, and any matters of significant concern are brought to the notice of the governors. Pupils benefit from education appropriate to their age about e-safety, cyber-bullying, social risks and the acceptable use of ICT.
- 4.19 The school provides effectively for ill or injured pupils. The needs of any pupils with existing medical conditions are well known to staff. Medical facilities comply with regulations, and detailed records of accidents and illness are maintained. A number of staff are trained in emergency first aid, one of whom is trained to the higher level, and a number are trained in paediatric first aid.
- 4.20 A range of suitable policies and procedures promotes a safe environment, and the health and safety committee meets regularly. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. A fire consultant has recently reported on all aspects of the school's provision for fire prevention, and fire practices are held regularly. Electrical equipment is monitored through portable appliance testing. Other safety checks and the maintenance of equipment are systematically carried out and recorded. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for relevant activities

in and out of school. The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body exercises highly effective oversight of the whole school, including the EYFS, and is fully committed to the school's aims and ethos. The governors bring to their work a wide range of experience and expertise. The majority of them live locally and are former pupils or have children who have been or are being educated at the school. Taking a close interest in all aspects of the life of the school, the governors conscientiously discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, financial matters, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.3 The governors give valued support to senior management, with whom they take initiatives to promote the well-being of the school. The development plan is comprehensive, realistic and linked to clear strategic goals, and to the school's ideal of excellence in all that it undertakes. Evidence from reports to and minutes of full board meetings demonstrates a detailed and critical examination of the items on the agenda.
- 5.4 Governors' knowledge and insight benefit from their termly day in the school, when they observe, discuss and experience its day-to-day life at first hand. Well known to staff, they also regularly attend school events and sit on a variety of committees – education, finance, health and safety, buildings, ICT and personnel – and each one is assigned to an academic department or the EYFS. In accordance with their statutory duties, governors closely monitor regulatory compliance; as a body they carry out a thorough annual review of the safeguarding policies and procedures and the efficiency of their implementation.
- 5.5 New members of the governing body undertake an appropriate induction process, and governors keep abreast of current matters of governance by attending training courses.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 Leadership is highly effective, communicating clearly defined direction, standards and values such as respect for others and for democracy, which inspire and permeate the whole school community. It shares its vision with everyone who is involved in helping to achieve the school's excellence in terms of academic performance, pastoral care and the general well-being and personal development of pupils. The quiet care with which the school is led is complemented by ambition and drive.
- 5.8 A clear expression of the vision of excellence at the core of the school's aims is the number of present and recent initiatives to improve teaching and learning. It is manifested in practice by the imaginative design and construction of the new Nursery building. Leadership and management of the EYFS are excellent, and since the previous inspection the setting has made good progress as a result of its

continual review of the use of learning records to chart children's progress and inform planning. Senior management continues to develop ever more effective and refined procedures for assessing and monitoring individual pupils' academic progress and setting targets.

- 5.9 The new senior management team works purposefully and collaboratively and its members give excellent support to their colleagues, as well as setting an example of kindly, compassionate pastoral care. Well-organised meetings and highly efficient administration contribute to the smooth day-to-day operation of the school, ensuring an environment in which pupils feel secure and are able to fulfil their potential in many areas. The accessibility of senior management is noted and appreciated by staff, pupils and parents. Increasingly effective use of the school's information management systems enables staff to track pupils' personal and social progress in close detail.
- 5.10 As elsewhere, senior management is careful and thorough in its implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures throughout the school. The school is successful in recruiting suitably qualified staff, and all the required checks are in place, the single central register of appointments being meticulously maintained. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of child protection, welfare, health and safety. Attendance at some, but not all, whole-staff training sessions is registered. Further needs for professional development are identified through a systematic programme of annual appraisal, which includes lesson observation, evaluation of performance and identified objectives. Team teaching, the dissemination of the contents of in-service training courses and informal classroom visits by senior staff ensure an open and positive approach to school improvement and the sharing of the most effective practice. The educational programmes in the EYFS are effectively monitored, and supervision of staff is regularly carried out, leading to identification of needs and consequent professional development through training courses. Staff in the EYFS are appropriately trained in health and safety procedures, such as paediatric first aid and food hygiene.
- 5.11 Leaders delegate responsibilities effectively to middle managers who are accountable for the performance of their pastoral or academic area. Schemes of work in each subject are very well planned and are related to the school's overall academic ambitions. At the end of the academic year, heads of department present a wide-ranging review of their subject to senior management and subsequently to the governing body. The contents of the review are used to identify areas for improvement and for incorporating into the school development plan. In the EYFS, leadership is developing a more systematic approach to assessment and analysis of data, designed to build on the present informal arrangement to further refine effectiveness and ensure continued improvement.
- 5.12 In a non-hierarchical community, the strong team of support staff feels valued. With responsibility for the estate, finance, domestic and administrative areas of the school, its members also play key pastoral roles and help to ensure the provision of a successful holistic educational experience. The premises are very well maintained and presented, providing a setting conducive to learning and development.
- 5.13 The quality of links between the school and parents, carers and guardians is excellent. The responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive: parents are extremely satisfied with all aspects of the education and care their children receive, and are highly supportive of the school. Appreciative of the way in which the school is led and managed, they are happy with the quality and

quantity of the information that is made available to them. Most parents would recommend the school to others.

- 5.14 In discussion, parents of children in the EYFS expressed their appreciation of the nurturing environment and individual attention their children receive, the progress their children are making in both their learning and emotional development, and the communication which allows them to feel involved in their children's education. Highly effective partnerships with parents and others, together with consultation with external agencies when appropriate, ensure that all children benefit from a shared approach to their learning and development. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that all children's needs are met. Parents contribute to their children's learning by providing valuable information on entry and, thereafter, through continuing verbal or written communication. They are encouraged to share what children are achieving at home and to help children to record their memories. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress: in addition to informal communication, they receive written reports and are invited to consultation meetings once a term.
- 5.15 Similarly, the warm and constructive relationship with parents of pupils in Years 1 to 6 underpins the school's stated core belief that strong partnerships between home and school promote effective learning for each pupil. Staff at all levels are readily available to speak to parents at the start and end of each day or to answer queries by email; parents are satisfied that responses to their questions are timely. The procedure for dealing with complaints complies with regulatory requirements, and records show that parental concerns are handled promptly, sensitively and thoroughly.
- 5.16 School policies and other relevant documents are readily available. Comprehensive information about the school and fortnightly newsletters, which celebrate its many activities and showcase pupils' achievements, are easily accessible through the up-to-date website, for parents of both prospective and current pupils. Further useful information can be found in the prospectus and through a series of open days and tours for families interested in joining the school.
- 5.17 Parents appreciate the many opportunities they have to be involved in the work and progress of their children, and to contribute to their education. For example, parents share their experience and expertise, and have visited the youngest children to teach them colour names in Spanish and the older ones to talk about key religious events such as Hajj, while other parents help with outings and reading. Parents enjoy the opportunity to attend assemblies, sports fixtures, plays, performances and social events, as well as benefiting from informative sessions on topics such as transition to new year groups and e-safety. Termly written reports and parent consultations ensure that parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. Detailed, clear reports include test results and effort and attainment grades, as appropriate for each year group, as well as highlighting areas for development. The thriving parents' association organises a number of fund-raising and social events throughout the year, raising money for the purchase of special items. Each class has a parent representative, which helps to foster a strong sense of community and contributes to the family atmosphere that is a distinctive feature of the school.

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