INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRENTWOOD PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Brentwood Preparatory School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	**Brentwood Preparatory School**
DfE Number	**881/6035**
Registered Charity Number	**310864**
Address	**Brentwood Preparatory School** **Middleton Hall** **Brentwood** **Essex** **CM15 8EQ**
Telephone Number	**01277 243333**
Fax Number	**01277 243340**
Email Address	**prep@brentwood.essex.sch.uk**
Head	**Mr Jason Whiskerd**
Chair of Governors	**Mr Colin Finch**
Age Range	**3 to 11**
Total Number of Pupils	**400**
Gender of Pupils	**Mixed (209 boys; 191girls)**
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): **152** 5-11: **248**
Number of Day Pupils	Total: **400**
Head of EYFS Setting	**Mrs Sarah Wilson**
EYFS Gender	**Mixed**
Inspection dates	**22 Jan 2013 to 25 Jan 2013**

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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 February 2008.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Linda Donowho	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Heather-Jane Hopson Hill	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Paul Leeming	Team Inspector (Senior Manager, GSA school)
Mr Kim Parsley	Team Inspector (Senior Master, IAPS school)
Mrs Gillian Bilbo	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

1.1 Brentwood Preparatory school is a selective co-educational day school for pupils from the age of 3 to 11 set in 72 acres of landscaped and natural grounds in the centre of Brentwood. It was founded in 1892, originally as a boys' preparatory school with boarding facilities. The school moved to Middleton Hall, its present site adjacent to the Senior School, in 1949. The school became fully co-educational in 1999. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headmaster. The Pre-Preparatory School (pre-prep), for pupils aged from 3 to 7, opened in 1995 and has its own building, grounds and garden, as well as its own hall adjoining the prep hall and access to other Senior School facilities. The school is a charitable trust and shares its governors with the senior school.

1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 400 pupils on roll of whom 248 were in Years 3 to 6 (the prep), and 152 were in the pre-prep, 76 of them being in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Of these 38 pupils attend the nursery on a part time basis either in the morning or in the afternoon. The pupils come predominantly from business and professional families. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and a small proportion is drawn from a range of other nationalities and cultures. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support. Twenty-three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom needs extra support. From the results of nationally standardised tests, the ability profile of the school is above the national average.

1.3 The school aims to offer its pupils a first class education that prepares them for life in the modern world. It aims to treat every child as an individual and encourage them to strike a balance between work and play, in order to develop the skills necessary for success in the future. It seeks to encourage its pupils to develop a life-long love of learning and to strive for the highest academic standards in the classroom.

1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Class 5, Class 6	Reception

Pre-preparatory/Preparatory

School	NC name
Class 3, Class 4	Year 1
Class 1, Class 2	Year 2
Form 3	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4
Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6

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2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

2.1 The school is successful in meeting its aims and offers a high quality educational experience to its pupils. Throughout the school, the pupils' achievement is excellent because of their highly positive attitude to learning; they reach high standards both in their academic work and through a varied array of well-organised extra-curricular activities. The pupils' achievements are particularly notable in mathematics, literacy music, art and drama. They show increasing confidence in using their well developed literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are commendable. In the EYFS, children make excellent progress in their acquisition of skills in reading, writing, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Throughout the school, the pupils' success is promoted by a broad curriculum and excellent teaching which enables pupils to make individual responses to well judged challenges. Since the previous inspection the school has focused on teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice, with notable success. In lessons, teaching methods are particularly effective in motivating and enthusing pupils and challenging them to think for themselves and particular provision is made for the more able pupils. In some lessons, excellent use is made of the interactive white board to further enhance learning, but, this is not consistent across the school. Since the previous inspection the school has implemented a new marking policy. This is successful in indicating to pupils their targets for improvement. However, there are inconsistencies of implementation across year groups and subjects. The quality of the provision in the EYFS is excellent and teachers and assistants have a broad understanding of how the young children in their care learn.

2.2 The personal development of pupils throughout the school is excellent, and is supported by the excellent pastoral care, and effective welfare arrangements and health and safety procedures. Relationships within the school are extremely positive, and all adults are excellent role models; they provide effective support and guidance and ensure that pupils are very happy and enjoy their life at school. Pupils often show maturity beyond their years in the way that they care for each other and look after any visitors. Older pupils develop supportive relationships with younger pupils, and pupils are given many opportunities for responsibilities and accept these with enthusiasm and pride.

2.3 The aims of the school are fulfilled and fostered by the governing body, which is committed to the academic progress and personal development of the pupils. Governors have exceptional oversight of the school, informed by the reports from the head, the meeting of the education committee and with members of staff and by their regular visits to the school. Leadership and management including that of the EYFS are excellent, with effective policies and procedures which support pupils considerably in their academic and personal development. Recruitment procedures are efficient and safe, and all checks on staff, regular assistants and visitors are applied fully and correctly. Links with parents are excellent; parents are generally satisfied about all aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision. However, a small number of parents indicated that they would like more information on their children's progress. Inspection evidence confirmed that whilst reports for older pupils provide a detailed summary of pupils' progress and achievement, they do not always give detailed, specific areas for development.

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2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. In reports to parents, include the use of specific targets to further inform parents of what their children need to do to improve.
2. Ensure that the new marking strategy in the prep is applied consistently across subjects.
3. Improve the use of interactive white boards for learning across the school through the sharing of existing expertise.

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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 Success in academic work throughout the school fulfils the school's aims to encourage pupils to develop a lifelong love of learning and to strive for the highest academic standards in the classroom. At all stages of the school, pupils show high levels of knowledge and understanding, and well-developed skills. Key factors supporting these are the broad curriculum, and the pupils' outstanding attitudes towards their learning. Most pupils gain entry to Brentwood Senior School at the age of 11, a significant number receiving scholarships.

3.3 The outcomes for children in the EYFS are excellent, particularly in their acquisition of literacy and numeracy, and in their independence. They are happy, secure, and willingly engage in a broad range of activities. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent literacy and numeracy skills because of the strong focus on these areas and the careful monitoring of progress. In the EYFS, Nursery children are beginning to recognise letters and to write their names whilst those in Reception write and sequence sentences using their phonic knowledge, and know that sentences begin with a capital letter. Other children are working at word level and can use prompts to write sentences. As pupils move through the school, they read and write with increasing fluency and for a range of purposes. Much of this writing is of a very high standard, showing clear evidence of critical thought and creativity. In all lessons, interviews and informal conversations, the pupils were confident, articulate, open and effective in explaining their views and feelings. They are highly effective listeners, responding thoughtfully to one another and to their teachers.

3.4 In the EYFS, children learn to count accurately and learn the concept of addition and subtraction. Both prep and pre-prep pupils demonstrate excellent ability in number, and develop their own strategies for problem solving and applying mathematics in a practical way. In the EYFS children begin to investigate, solve problems and think logically with great enthusiasm, sharing their thoughts with each other and explaining their ideas clearly. Pupils throughout the school acquire a high level of understanding of scientific concepts and investigative skills are suitably developed. Pupils use the library to good effect for research and prep pupils are well supported by the librarian. Excellent use is made of ICT across the curriculum and pupils display a high level of competence when working with computers.

3.5 The pupils' creative achievements are highly commendable. The many drama productions, the art displayed around the school, including in the EYFS, and the high quality singing in assemblies and by the many school choirs are a testimony to this. Many pupils achieve good grades in instrumental music examinations and they use their skills in various musical ensembles and events in school.

3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 7 in 2011, the first year they had been taken, are far above the national average for maintained primary schools. Results at age of 11 are well above the national average for maintained primary schools. In the EYFS, children achieve well across all areas of learning. From a range of starting points they develop in ways which are generally above average for their age. In the pre-prep and prep, the level of attainment and the nationally standardised progress data

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available, demonstrate a high rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Inspection evidence, as seen in lesson observations, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, confirms this judgement.

3.7 Pupils with SEND make excellent progress in relation to their starting points because they receive strong additional support. This is evident in the improvement in their reading, spelling and numeracy skills, as well as their high levels of self-esteem. More able pupils are particularly well catered for, both in lessons through specific challenge and in the many enrichment activities available to them.

3.8 Pupils achieve high standards in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and these achievements make an effective contribution to their personal development, enabling them to demonstrate their individual confidence, team skills and respect for each other. They achieve high levels of skill in sports and enjoy an excellent measure of success at both team and individual level, such as in netball, rugby football, gymnastics, cricket, dance and chess. .

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

3.9 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.

3.10 The school provides a curriculum which is commensurate with its aims to provide a first-class education. In meeting the needs of all children who attend the EYFS, the curriculum provision is excellent. Clearly structured programmes for language and communication, and social, emotional and physical education ensure that children have key skills needed for the next steps in their learning. In the prep and pre-prep, the curriculum is also well-suited to meet the needs of all pupils. Curricular support for those requiring additional help is strong, and the systems for identifying and supporting such pupils work well. The SEND co-ordinator liaises closely with form tutors and specialist staff, and children being identified as needing support are given individual education plans (IEPs) which are well-monitored. Children identified by the school as being able and talented are well catered for in lessons, and through, for example, a recent poetry workshop, and other enrichment opportunities.

3.11 The curriculum covers the requisite areas of learning, and also includes a very effective personal, social, health and cultural programme, (PSHCE) which is taught as a separate subject and which supports the emotional development of each pupil. In addition, French is offered as an additional subject from Year 1, verbal reasoning from Year 4 and Latin from Year 6, and drama is a dedicated subject across the prep school. The school uses ICT as a valuable tool to support all aspects of the curriculum, as well as being taught as a discrete subject. The allocation of subjects is well-balanced, and although particular emphasis is placed upon developing skills in the core subjects of mathematics and English, creative subjects also receive excellent coverage. Since the previous inspection, the timetable has been successfully reviewed to ensure that the school's very extensive sporting programme does not compromise the time available to the non-core subjects.

3.12 There is a seamless progression between the pre-prep and the prep school. The sharing of good professional practice, together with more effective planning between subject staff, has ensured greater parity of curriculum content across subject departments and year groups. Subject co-ordinators take responsibility for ensuring that schemes of work are regularly reviewed and updated, and cross-curricular work is a strong feature throughout the school.

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3.13 The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. A wide variety of clubs is available, complementing lessons effectively and meeting the school's holistic aim to develop the whole child. Before-school, lunchtime and after-school clubs include creative writing and eco-club for the prep pupils and Spanish for the younger pupils together with an impressive range of sporting and musical activities, such as fencing and chamber choir. Workshops and day visits further enrich the curriculum, including a visit by Year 4 pupils to a local Synagogue and a Great Fire workshop for those in Year 2. Residential visits for Years 4, 5 and 6 also provide pupils with additional challenges and opportunities.

3.14 Throughout the school pupils engage in a diverse and very active programme of work with the local community, linking with the school's aim to enable children to develop leadership skills and work with a sense of service to others. Speakers are regularly invited into assemblies, pupils in Year 1 are active correspondents with children from a south London school, and various community projects of benefit to local children are hosted by the school. These activities afford the children opportunities to develop social and personal skills, considerably enrich the curriculum and are of great benefit to all pupils.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.

3.16 Throughout the school, teaching enables pupils to develop a very secure understanding in all subjects and to make excellent progress. Teaching is well planned with a high degree of awareness of the differing needs of all of the pupils. It supports the school's aims, contributing successfully to pupils' high levels of achievement.

3.17 In the EYFS, through careful questioning, the children are given many opportunities to express themselves clearly and with confidence. They are encouraged to use language for a variety of reasons, for example to discuss how the brain works, or in designing their dinosaur model. An excellent variety of planned indoor and outdoor activities gives children some exciting experiences across all the areas of learning.

3.18 Extremely well planned, lively lessons ensure pupils of all ages thoroughly enjoy their learning and provide stimulus and challenge. Most of the teaching is well-paced and characterised by clear learning intentions and success criteria identified at the start of lessons, followed by effective questioning of pupils in order that they can assist in shaping the success criteria themselves. Teachers question pupils skilfully to challenge their thinking. They set a well-planned framework for them to investigate and explore. In most lessons, teachers give pupils a high level of personal attention, helping pupils to fulfil their potential and gain in confidence.

3.19 Across the school, there is a consistent approach of providing opportunities in lessons for pupils to work collaboratively. This enables them to use peer discussion to support and develop their understanding and skills. Questions are carefully targeted to support individual pupils' ability in class. Much of the teaching provides opportunities for pupils to work independently, developing their ability to take more responsibility for their work.

3.20 Teaching meets the needs of pupils of different abilities extremely well. Pupils with SEND are supported most effectively in lessons by their teachers and by teaching assistants, enabling them to make excellent progress. Further opportunities to promote learning in maths include small groups of top set Year 6 pupils assisting

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less able Year 4 pupils in the schools 'maths marvels' scheme. Each week, pupils in Years 3 and 4 join together for 'Brentwood can do maths' where pupils are separated into a number of small mixed groups according to attainment levels, and work creatively in order to promote confidence and understanding. More able pupils are continuously challenged in lessons by the high expectations of their teachers and are given specific activities to extend their learning.

3.21 Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a new marking policy. When it is used effectively, the marking of books is excellent, with realistic targets for improvement set. However, there are inconsistencies of implementation across year groups and subjects and in the follow-up of targets set. When marking is less rigorous, pupils do not know what they must do to improve. The use of ICT is widespread across the school in all subjects. Classrooms are well equipped, and in some lessons the use of interactive whiteboards by staff and pupils alike is excellent, although this is not often the case, and thus their potential for enhancing learning is not being fulfilled.

3.22 The teachers' subject knowledge is excellent in all subjects and pupils benefit from specialised teaching in a wide range of subjects. Teachers have very high expectations for pupils, and praise and encouragement are used to good effect. All staff know their pupils well and the excellent relationships are marked by mutual respect, creating an environment conducive to learning and exemplary behaviour from pupils in class.

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4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

4.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is of the highest quality throughout the school in accordance with its aims and ethos. The pupils often reflect upon their own achievements and can offer mature, self-critical observations of their behaviour and work. They recognise their own strengths and those of their peers, and are confident that teachers will always support them. In the EYFS, children show excellent personal development. They feel safe and are confident in making choices, selecting activities and trying out new things. The children engage effectively with their peers and with adults. They behave extremely well, work collaboratively and show respect for each other.

4.3 The pupils are confident and self-aware. They demonstrate a strong sense of reflection on non-material aspects of life when taking part in assemblies, the creative arts and the many uplifting musical activities, particularly the choirs. They have a strong sense of self-esteem as a result of the recognition they receive for their successes, both in class and in assemblies. In the pre-prep, teachers provide good opportunities for the younger pupils to share their experiences with their peers.

4.4 Pupils demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong and respect the school's behaviour code. All pupils have a respect for others and are encouraged to involve each other in solving pastoral issues. There is a culture of mutual respect and the school's high expectations of its pupils are implicit in school life. Pupils are aware of the rights and wrongs in society and of looking after their environment. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the life of the school through their roles as prefects, peer mediators, house captains, energy monitors, maths marvels and school council representatives. House captains are elected on a termly basis, providing more pupils with the opportunity of fulfilling this role and each form elects two representatives to sit on the school council. The pupils recognise that their school council is a democratic way for their views and aspirations to be aired and considered. In the EYFS, children willingly take on responsibility for keeping the classroom tidy and orderly. They learn to work co-operatively and to share resources. The pre-prep also has a school council and there is an eco club that promotes green initiatives. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others beyond their school and the whole school actively contributes to those in society who are less fortunate than themselves. Many charities and good causes have benefited from the school's fundraising activities, many of which are selected by the pupils. In the pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of pupils indicated that there were few opportunities to take on responsibility. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.

4.5 The pupils have an excellent appreciation and respect for their own and each other's faith and cultures. Pupils and staff celebrate the diversity of the school's members, enabling all pupils to develop an insight into the values and beliefs of others, and to develop harmonious relations with them. Involvement in concerts, learning about well-known artists, and taking part in and watching drama productions add depth to their cultural experiences.

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

4.6 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.

4.7 Across all aspects of the school's life, staff provide exemplary pastoral support for pupils in line with the school's aims. Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are positive, underpinned by a sense of harmony.

4.8 The school's policies and procedures for promoting an ethos of positive behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying work very well. Pupils appreciate and value the systems that reward good behaviour, work and effort. A small number of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that staff were not always fair in the way they gave rewards and sanctions. However, in discussions with pupils, inspectors found no evidence to support this. Pupils felt that the school deals with any poor behaviour in an efficient and sensitive manner through the clear system recently introduced.

4.9 The staff know individual pupils very well and provide excellent support and guidance for them. In the EYFS, key people form strong bonds with the children and promote high standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect for one another. Children are taught to develop a good awareness of personal safety and observe the simple rules that relate to this. They are helped to develop self-help skills and good hygiene practices from an early age. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent.

4.10 A newly developed central system of recording pastoral matters ensures that a holistic picture of the well-being of each pupil is built up and can be accessed by all staff. In the pre-prep, staff liaise on a daily basis to discuss any pupil concerns and these are sensitively handled at an appropriate level. Although a small minority of pupils felt that they were not always able to give their views, inspection findings showed that through their tutors, class teachers, and through the school council, pupils do have a voice.

4.11 Throughout the school pupils are confident to seek help from any member of staff. Year 6 pupils receive training in peer mediation and this has been successfully introduced to further enhance the playground atmosphere by helping pupils to resolve their own problems. A clear code of conduct and anti-bullying guidelines are displayed around the school, as well as guidance for pupils on what to do if they feel worried or sad. This underpins the school's philosophy to be a 'telling school'.

4.12 Pupils, including those in the EYFS, have a firm understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and this is supported by the school's provision of excellent, nutritious and well-balanced meals. Exercise is valued and excellent opportunities are provided by the school for pupils to take part in a variety of physical activities. 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

4.13 The quality of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent

4.14 The school pays close attention to the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive, and reflects accurately current practice. It is reviewed annually by senior managers and the governing body. Training for all staff in child protection procedures is carried out thoroughly in all areas of the school and updated appropriately.

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4.15 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, procedures are practised regularly and efficient records kept. Excellent general risk assessments around the extensive school grounds ensure that safety is a priority and those for outside visits and school activities are completed. Any health and safety concerns are raised weekly at staff meetings and at governors' health and safety committee meetings, and necessary action is taken.

4.16 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils are excellent. Staff are very well informed about individual needs and conditions, and the medical room makes comfortable provision for pupils who are ill. The school nurse is available when needed and many staff are trained in first aid.

4.17 In the EYFS, children are carefully safeguarded. Clear procedures are thoughtfully implemented to ensure that their welfare is effectively promoted across the setting. Several staff have paediatric first-aid qualifications. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken in all areas.

4.18 The admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately and suitably archived.

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5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.

5.2 Governors bring a wide range of relevant expertise and experience to their role, including substantial experience in education. This enables them to provide outstanding support and challenge to all aspects of school life, and thus help the school to fulfil its aims. Great care and consideration is taken in the selection of new governors and all governors receive a full induction on appointment, and regular update training thereafter.

5.3 Governance systems are excellent, with a clear committee structure and regular meetings. Strong strategic planning and prudent financial management have ensured excellent investment in high-quality staff, accommodation and resources. They exercise their monitoring role extremely well, giving supportive yet appropriate challenge to the school's leadership. Minutes from committee meetings indicate that governors have a strong awareness of educational standards in the school. They are also kept well informed by informal contact with senior staff as well as through regular formal reports and subject presentations. The designation of individual governors with particular responsibility for an aspect of school life, and the regular meetings of the Governors' Prep Committee ensure that ensure that both the prep and the pre-prep receive effective oversight. The governors' frequent attendance at formal and informal events ensures that they are familiar figures in the school community. All new staff are invited to meet the governors and all staff are able to meet with governors following a whole governors meeting.

5.4 Through their regular programme of meetings and training, governors review and take responsibility for safeguarding and child protection procedures and practices.

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

5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent

5.6 The strengths in leadership in both the pre-prep and the prep school are reflected in high academic standards, excellent teaching and outstanding personal development, as well as the happy and friendly ethos that is apparent throughout the whole school

5.7 All staff in leadership and management positions work extremely well together, and provide consistently good quality support to colleagues. This significantly contributes to the successful management of the whole school and to the fulfilment of its aims. Self evaluation across the school, including in the EYFS, shows a strong understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses, and sets clear direction for future developments. Roles and job descriptions are clear and focused on ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning. The leadership in both the prep and pre-prep have established very effective systems to monitor the educational experience of the pupils. Subject co-ordinators have a clear oversight of their subjects and manage them well and the link between the prep and pre-prep co-ordinators is very strong, as is the link with the senior school. Communication amongst staff in all areas is a strength of the whole school. A great deal of informal

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discussion about teaching and learning takes place, as well as regular staff meetings and formal monitoring and review.

5.8 Clear school development plans are in place, which set out specific areas of educational improvement. This clarity of vision benefits the whole community. The ethos and direction across the school is clearly set by the senior leadership and all staff work hard to maintain these principles in the life of the school. Procedures and policies are clear and appropriately detailed. They are well implemented by staff and contribute successfully to the smooth running of daily school life.

5.9 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably-qualified staff, and all required checks and records are in place. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Further needs for professional development are identified by a thorough appraisal system. Regular lesson observations and more informal visits by senior leaders ensure an open and positive attitude to school improvement and the sharing of the best practice. Staff feel well supported, yet accountable.

5.10 The school promotes excellent relationships with parents which are characterised by strong lines of communication. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that most parents are extremely satisfied with the provision for their children and with the education their children receive. The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. Parents' concerns are heard promptly and treated with care and consideration; as a result the vast majority can be dealt with swiftly and informally.

5.11 Information flows freely from the school to parents in a variety of ways. Regular newsletters, text messages and email allow for a full exchange of up-to-date and accurate information, while the prospectus and website are both helpful for parents of prospective pupils. Regular newsletters from both the prep and the pre-prep are posted on the school website. Parents evenings at the beginning of each academic year inform parents about the topics to be covered and curriculum information evenings are held during the year. However, in the pre-inspection questionnaire a small number of parents indicated that they would like more information on their children's progress. Inspection evidence confirmed that whilst reports for older pupils provide a detailed summary of pupils' progress and achievement, they do not always give detailed, specific areas for development. Parents' evenings are held twice each year for older pupils and three times a year for pupils in the pre-prep

5.12 A small number of parents indicated in the parent's questionnaire that they are not given opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. Inspection evidence found that parents have many opportunities to be involved. They are encouraged to participate in the learning experience of their children through helping with homework, curriculum information meetings, giving talks and demonstrations, attending concerts, charitable events and supporting community projects and charity days. There is an active parents' association which organises fund raising and social events for the school, and parents are encouraged to join.

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

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