



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL (ROCHESTER)**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St Andrew's School (Rochester)

Full Name of School	<b>St Andrew's School (Rochester)</b>
DfE Number	<b>887/6002</b>
EYFS Number	<b>118985</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>270901</b>
Address	<b>St Andrew's School (Rochester)</b> <b>28 Watts Avenue</b> <b>Rochester</b> <b>Kent</b> <b>ME1 1SA</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01634 843479</b>
Fax Number	<b>01634 840789</b>
Email Address	<b>info@st-andrews.rochester.sch.uk</b>
Principal	<b>Mrs Joan Jabbour</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Sara Hodson</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>358</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (190 boys; 168 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	2-3 (EYFS): <b>20</b> 5-11: <b>256</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>82</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>358</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Noelle Odie (Pre-School)</b> <b>Miss Nicola Marshall (Reception)</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>30 Sep 2014 to 03 Oct 2014</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous inspection was carried out by Ofsted in November 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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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 and a representative of the proprietor, 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**

Mrs Jane Chesterfield

Mr Thomas Mylne

Mrs Claire Osborn

Mr Nicholas Park

Mr Richard Balding

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, ISA/IAPS School)

Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA School)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS School)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Andrew's School is a day school for girls and boys situated near the centre of Rochester in Kent. The school is owned by CfBT Education Trust, which is a registered charity, and is directed by a board of governors. It was founded in 1951 and is located in three adjoining Victorian houses. The pre-school is located in an adjacent road. The school was taken over by CfBT Education Trust in November 1999.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a high quality all-round education to provide a challenging and stimulating environment necessary for outstanding academic achievement in local selective examinations; to foster a caring atmosphere in which pupils and teachers are aware of and sympathetic to the needs of others; to encourage all pupils to become responsible individuals who can work together co-operatively and with respect for their peers, and to offer a wide range of opportunities for all pupils to develop self-confidence and a sense of responsibility, so that they are well prepared for the challenges of life.
- 1.3 The school educates girls and boys aged from two to eleven years, offering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its pre-school and in its Reception classes. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been constituted in January 2013. Prior to that, the school's director and assistant school's director of CfBT, the principal and the deputy principal were responsible for governance.
- 1.4 Currently there are 358 pupils on roll, of whom 102 are in the EYFS. The ability profile of the pupils is mostly above the national average. Pupils come from mainly professional and business backgrounds, and just under half come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian.
- 1.5 Thirty-four pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), and four pupils receive support for this. Seventy-five pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and 21 receive specialist support from the school. One pupil currently has a statement of special educational need.
- 1.6 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 table.

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

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Pre-Reception	Nursery
Reception	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 St Andrew's School is highly successful in meeting its aims of providing a high quality all-round education in a challenging and stimulating environment and a caring atmosphere. Pupils' achievement is excellent, because of the school's thorough emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the consistently high quality of teaching in these areas. Their attainment is above national expectations and they make good progress. They benefit from good teaching, although there is some inconsistency across the school in some subjects. The school offers a good curriculum, which is well planned and often imaginatively presented, and is enhanced with an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. English and mathematics are given particular emphasis; this does not always extend to the other subjects offered. Children in the EYFS make a strong start to their education, as a result of outstanding provision for meeting their needs and promoting their well-being.
- 2.2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, thanks to the excellent quality of their relationships with staff and excellent attention given to pastoral care. They have a strong sense of self-awareness, a knowledge of right and wrong, a pride in taking on responsibilities, and an understanding of Western and other cultures. The school gives good attention to welfare, health and safety. Shortcomings in its safeguarding policy at the start of the inspection were quickly and thoroughly addressed once these were brought to the school's notice.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is good. The trust and the recently introduced governing body have a good insight into the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are working together effectively to develop their role of challenging the school and holding it to account. However, they have not yet introduced a systematic approach to making sure that the school always meets all relevant regulations. Leadership and management of the school are good, providing a clear direction for the school and excellent outcomes for pupils. To combat the variations in teaching, the school has developed processes for monitoring regularly its work, together with systems for spreading its best practices to all staff are developing, but these have yet to be embedded. Relationships with parents are excellent. They are happy with the quality of education offered by the school and the opportunities they have to be involved with its work and with their children's learning.

## **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. Improve consistency in the quality of teaching in all subjects to match that of the best already evident in the school.
  2. Devise stronger systems to ensure that policies fully reflect implementation in practice and the latest regulatory requirements.
  3. Ensure that the systems for identifying and promoting good practice to all staff are working as intended and improving outcomes for the pupils.



### **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 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim of providing a challenging and stimulating environment necessary for outstanding academic achievement in local selective examinations. Most pupils from Year 6 gain places at grammar schools each year. Thanks to the school's thorough focus on literacy and numeracy, pupils acquire excellent skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and mathematics. Pupils read widely and are confident about writing for a wide variety of purposes, with secure grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction. They enjoy opportunities to use their basic skills to solve problems and find things out for themselves, for example in mathematics and in science. They listen attentively and express themselves clearly and logically. They show excellent creativity in their high quality artwork, and are adept at using information and communication technology (ICT).
- 3.3 Pupils are lively and energetic, and put a great deal of effort into their physical education (PE) lessons. Outside the classroom, pupils represent the school with success in tournaments such as hockey, chess, netball, tag rugby, swimming, basketball, cross-country and flying disc. They also pass graded examinations in music, singing and dance.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data from 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Throughout the school, pupils show high standards of attainment. Results in national tests at the ages of seven and eleven have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools in reading, writing and mathematics. These attainment levels show that pupils of all ages make good progress, and this is confirmed by lesson observations, discussions with pupils and examination of their work. More able pupils are very successful in reaching the higher levels because of the school's efforts to prepare them for the local selective examinations. The achievement and progress of pupils with EAL is similar to that of their classmates, as a result of the school's focus on basic skills. Those pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points, because their needs are promptly identified and met, and they achieve appropriately high standards.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy learning and are eager to participate in lessons. As they grow older, they learn to value their education and take a pride in what they can achieve. They take care to present their work well and carry out corrections or improvements requested by teachers. They take good work habits with them to the next stage in their education.

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

- 3.6 The quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, the thoroughly planned curriculum supports the school's aims of providing a quality all-round education. There is a particular focus on English and mathematics, in accordance with the school's aims, but while other appropriate subjects are included, they do not always have the same emphasis. Planning of work is well set out and is consistent between the subjects. The curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs, covering all required subjects and areas of learning.
- 3.8 The school identifies pupils who have SEND or EAL, or who are able, gifted and talented, through an effective tracking programme. Measures are put in place from entry into Year 1 to meet their needs appropriately. Clear systems of intervention are identified in terms of teaching and planning, and the learning support is expertly monitored and delivered.
- 3.9 Cross-curricular links are effectively highlighted between subjects through key events such as National Poetry Day. Pupils comment on their enjoyment of themed days and how they thread through their lessons. Care is given in the design of the curriculum so that subject teaching in Years 3 to 6 builds appropriately upon previously taught skills.
- 3.10 Throughout the school there is a strong focus on the application of literacy and numeracy skills. Within these there is a wide range of planned activities which enable pupils to write for different purposes and investigate different themes. Pupils in Year 4, for example, have published their own school handbooks. Additionally, subject planning from Year 3 upwards allows specialist teachers to provide for a range of skills, notably in art where multi-sensory activities are provided, resulting in pupils producing excellent work. There are good opportunities for pupils to express their creativity through music, and the well-maintained soft and hard play areas outdoors support an extensive sports programme.
- 3.11 The curriculum is designed to make the most of the accommodation, with ample opportunities for pupils to experience a range of contexts beyond the classroom, through an extensive educational visits programme and themed activities, such as the recent science day or residential visits to France and to an activity centre.
- 3.12 The curriculum is supplemented by an excellent extra-curricular programme of clubs and visits which change termly, offering all pupils the chance to take part and to try new challenges. Activities range from swimming to board games, and code club to multisport training. Pupils report that they enjoy the range of activities and opportunities available to them. Clubs such as infant singing link into the main curriculum as pupils prepare performances for the rest of the school. There are well-attended homework and after-school clubs, and a breakfast club is available before school for those who require it. Sporting fixtures are varied with some competitive, some by invitation and others fully inclusive to ensure that all pupils are able to experience participation. An attractive half-termly newsletter highlights the school's wider involvement in local sport.

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

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.14 Teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' attainment and progress, and is consistent with the school's aims of providing a challenging and stimulating environment, a caring atmosphere with mutual co-operation and a wide range of opportunities for all pupils to develop self-confidence. The leadership team has put in place measures to help monitor the consistency of teaching across all subjects in order to build on the good practice already evident in the school.
- 3.15 The staff have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to set tasks in an atmosphere of calm and purposeful activity, and apply themselves to their work. Staff expertly encourage pupils to persevere with a task, thus ensuring that a deeper level of understanding is gained.
- 3.16 Well-planned lessons, outlining clear learning objectives, aid pupils in assessing their own progress. A wide range of learning resources is used and pupils are enthused by the opportunity to engage in practical tasks such as using tablet computers to create newspaper articles. Time management in lessons is generally good and a good variety of teaching styles is employed to ensure that pupils remain active and engaged.
- 3.17 Teachers have secure subject knowledge and teaching often uses collaborative and extended tasks which challenge and interest the pupils, establishing the pupils' understanding and enabling them to use their skills in a variety of contexts. Younger pupils engage in practical tasks such as making structures out of marshmallows and pasta. Most teaching is effective in meeting the needs of the range of pupils present, for example by providing targeted work for able pupils or those with EAL or SEND.
- 3.18 In the few less successful lessons, the pace is too slow and the teaching is too directed, which results in insufficient progress being made. Sometimes behaviour is not well managed. Such lessons do not always take enough note of the needs of individual pupils when planning work. For example, extension work can be simply by an extra activity rather than a more challenging one.
- 3.19 Marking is thorough and informative. Older pupils often respond to teachers' comments in their books and are made aware of what they need to do to improve, using checklists and, where appropriate, indicators of National Curriculum levels in their books. In some subjects there is less attention to detail with an over-reliance on peer or self-marking.
- 3.20 A wide range of assessment data and half-termly assessments mean that teachers know their pupils' abilities, especially in the core subjects where the tracking of pupils is regular and thorough. Half-termly assessments take place in other subjects, although it is not always clear how this feeds into future planning. Most, though not all, of the teaching makes good use of questioning to check on progress within lessons. This helps pupils to focus on what they need to do to improve.
- 3.21 In all interviews, pupils spoke very well of their teachers and how much they helped them learn. Pupil pre-inspection questionnaires were similarly positive. Pupils and staff talk about their own experiences and enjoy bringing these anecdotes to class.

## **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 Pupils show great maturity for their age and are quietly confident in their dealings with adults and with each other. By the time they reach the older classes, pupils have developed into assured, articulate, sensitive and overwhelmingly confident young people. In this, they fulfil one of the aims of the school that children should develop self-confidence in preparation for the challenges that they will face in life. In their discussions with inspectors and in the pupil pre-inspection questionnaire, several pupils specifically described how the school had enabled them to become more confident and self-assured. They particularly praised those teachers who encourage pupils to do things that they might at first be scared to attempt.
- 4.3 Spiritual development is excellent. In their weekly assemblies in the local church and in many of their academic lessons, pupils learn to respect the value of non-material things. For example, in the art department, pupils in Year 6 have created a wall-sized picture accurately representing the famous cave paintings at Lascaux. A sense of awe was engendered in pupils, also from Year 6, by work for a local archaeological project involving making a 'fossil skeleton' from flint and other materials found in local fields. Friendship is valued highly and, in their interviews with inspectors, pupils spoke frequently about the importance of friends.
- 4.4 The pupils show excellent moral development. Through constant affirmation by teachers and from the example of many of the older pupils, younger pupils quickly develop a keen sense of right and wrong. By the time they reach Year 6 and are appointed prefects and monitors, they have become good role models. They are more than ready to demonstrate to the school community a respect for the norms of good behaviour that are so much a feature of the school.
- 4.5 The pupils' excellent social development is reflected in their daily lives. The older pupils are intensely proud of the responsibilities that they are given and speak of their badges of office with evident delight. In younger classes, they are equally pleased to be made form captains or to undertake helpful duties. All Junior School pupils contribute to the house of which they are part, and many of them are enthusiastic about taking part in fundraising events to support people in Great Britain or further afield who are less fortunate than themselves. The school recognises and rewards such deeds by entering the pupils' names in the 'golden book', which the pupils consider to be a great honour. The school works to develop pupils' respect for our national leaders, so a Year 6 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson explored the examples and leadership shown by national and world leaders, as well as role models nearer to home. In such ways, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of British public life and institutions, and their role in society.
- 4.6 Cultural development is excellent. Pupils from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds come to understand and respect other faiths and cultures, and show a clear appreciation of, and interest in, their achievements. They are enthusiastic about the other cultures which they study, for example designing and making totem poles, Aztec artefacts and aboriginal shields in art. At the same time, pupils are also clear about the values of the Western cultural tradition. Pupils from non-Christian backgrounds were enthusiastic about the forthcoming harvest festival and some were eagerly anticipating opportunities to take part in the carol services at the end of

term. Visits to the theatre and to art galleries in London, including the tribal art galleries of a well-known institution, further enrich pupils' personal development. In their everyday interactions, pupils demonstrate harmonious relations with those from families different to their own.

- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, the pupils' personal development is excellent.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The excellent results of the systems in place to support pastoral care were widely praised by both pupils and parents in the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Pupils enjoy good relationships with staff, who in turn provide effective support for the pupils and are highly effective role models. In discussion with inspectors, pupils identified the importance of their form teachers, describing how much they appreciate being able to turn to them for help whenever they have a difficulty. Notices around the school name other members of staff whom pupils may seek out if a problem arises. Relationships are equally positive among the pupils themselves, exemplified in simple acts of kindness such as picking up something another pupil has dropped. Pupils are respectful of others and ready to listen to their point of view.
- 4.10 Pupils are helped to be fit and healthy by their sports and PE sessions, though in discussion with inspectors and in the pre-inspection questionnaires a significant minority said that they would like to have more time for exercise. The school stresses the importance of healthy eating, both at lunchtime and with regard to the snacks pupils bring into school. In the questionnaires, a few pupils suggested that school lunches should be improved. However, inspectors found the food to be of good quality, and many pupils reported that there had recently been good improvements. Restrictions on space in the dining rooms mean that lunchtime is rather hurried.
- 4.11 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour and preventing bullying. Pupils report that they understand the school rules and that any unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with swiftly. The school keeps appropriate records of behaviour, and monitors carefully how its policies and procedures work in practice. The buddy system is highly regarded by pupils who know that they will be supported by specially trained, sympathetic peers.
- 4.12 The school has an up-to-date plan to develop and improve access for any pupil who has a disability.
- 4.13 The school actively seeks the views of pupils. Pupils who have ideas or concerns are encouraged to ask representatives on the school council to raise the matter at a meeting. Pupils confirm that the council is effective and has a broad remit.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 The school places great emphasis on its arrangements for pupils' safety and welfare. In all matters regarding pupils' welfare, the school keeps meticulous records. Training in safeguarding is carried out regularly at recommended intervals, and all staff are required to attend updating sessions. The school follows the latest guidance for keeping children safe. In addition, pupils' welfare is supported by all staff having regularly updated first-aid training. At the start of the inspection, the school's safeguarding policy did not meet the latest requirements, but when this was brought to the school's attention, the policy was swiftly amended. It now complies with requirements.
- 4.16 Procedures for fire prevention are carefully set out; fire drills are held regularly and fully recorded. Detailed risk assessments are held on file and updated at regular intervals. These cover many different aspects of school life, including off-site visits.
- 4.17 Pupils who become unwell or who are injured during the school day are looked after in the well-appointed medical room until their parents are able to take them home. Appropriate first-aid training is undertaken by all staff on a regular basis. In this, as in all matters to do with pupils' welfare, the school maintains accurate and detailed records.
- 4.18 The school's admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored. Registers are taken promptly at the beginning of the morning and the afternoon sessions.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The proprietor and the governing body share their responsibilities for the school effectively, ensuring that, between them, they have a good oversight of the all aspects of the school's work. They preside over a school which is successful in meeting its aims of making sure that pupils achieve highly in their academic work and are well prepared for the future. Centralised functions within the trust directing finance, human resources and premises management ensure that these areas operate smoothly. The trust spends its money prudently, making sure that the school's accommodation is generally appropriate to needs and well-maintained. The space for dining is limited.
- 5.3 Although new to their role, governors are developing their skills well, and have a good insight into the school's work and offer both support and challenge to staff. They have undergone relevant training, and have good understanding of the school's data tracking systems, and the priorities of the school development plan.
- 5.4 Scrutiny of the safeguarding policy prior to the inspection showed that the school has not always been rigorous in ensuring that it keeps up-to-date with the most recent regulatory requirements. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken suitable steps to ensure that identified shortcomings had been dealt with, and all arrangements now comply with requirements, including the annual review of safeguarding and child protection.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 Leaders and managers are successful in fulfilling the school's aims of providing a high-quality education for a competitive fee and providing the environment necessary for outstanding academic achievement in entrance examinations for local selective schools. The leadership team fosters a happy school where pupils feel safe, enjoy their learning and show a thoughtful consideration for their teachers and peers. Senior leaders have updated school policies so that they now meet all requirements and have introduced systems to monitor their effective implementation. Staff appointments follow appropriate procedures and due consideration is given to the safeguarding of pupils. Safeguarding records are kept meticulously. All staff and volunteers have the required safety checks, and current safeguarding training has now been given to all staff.
- 5.7 The recently restructured leadership team is setting a clear educational direction for the school to ensure its continuing success. They have regular oversight of the curriculum and have introduced a very thorough tracking system for reading, writing and mathematics, which is used effectively by staff to guide their planning of work. The leadership team is successful in encouraging the excellent personal development of pupils; they provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, including school council and form captains in every year group.

- 5.8 The leadership is sharply focused on continuous school improvement. There is a detailed development plan in place with clearly defined priorities, which is reviewed annually with staff and to which the staff contribute. Thorough systems are set up for regular work scrutiny and lesson observations. The school is currently developing suitable monitoring systems to ensure that teaching across the curriculum is consistently challenging and stimulating for all pupils, in line with the school's aims. The inspection evidence indicates that the new systems, whilst successfully introduced, are not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure that teaching is sufficiently consistent across the school.
- 5.9 The school has been successful in recruiting and developing new members of staff who contribute expertise both to the excellent achievement seen in lessons and to the impressive personal development of pupils. There is a good appraisal structure in place for all staff, including the administrative staff, with regular meetings to review and set objectives in line with the overall school development priorities. The leadership team recognises the importance of staff training and has a strong focus on providing training opportunities within and outside the school. All members of staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.10 Parents are extremely positive about the school and its achievements; they feel their children make very good progress over time, and are well prepared for competitive local entrance examinations. Parents appreciate the time given by the principal to meet families personally to discuss senior school transfer and to offer guidance. Parents have suitable opportunities to meet staff when children move from the Pre-Reception into Reception and when pupils move from Year 2 to Year 3. Popular parent drop-in sessions provide opportunities for them to meet class teachers near the start of the year.
- 5.11 Relationships between parents and the school staff are excellent. The school leadership team provide a visible presence around the school and parents say that leaders are approachable and quick to respond to any concerns or enquiries. There is a comprehensive policy in place to deal with any complaints and the school is careful to follow the procedures set out within it. Parents have confidence in the school's handling of concerns. Most parents feel that any incidents of alleged bullying are dealt with swiftly and sensitively before they escalate.
- 5.12 A very small proportion of parents indicated in the questionnaire returns that information is not readily available and some felt that information on the school website was not always current. Inspectors judged that parents received suitable information from the school. A member of staff is now responsible for keeping the website updated so that the parents of prospective and current pupils can easily access relevant information about the school. Parents receive regular emails and newsletters.
- 5.13 The school provides numerous opportunities for parents to be involved in school life. There is a committed and active parents' association, involved in fund-raising and organising events. In addition, there is an elected parent council to provide a forum for parents' views to be heard. The school provides a variety of parent workshops on areas of learning, which are presented by members of staff, with practical suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home. The school has over 50 parent volunteers who help in the library, accompany trips or run the highly successful 'walking bus', which has been in operation for 11 years and regularly wins awards.



- 5.14 The school provides detailed written reports twice a year. Currently there are parent consultation meetings for Junior year groups in the spring term and in the Autumn term for Infant year groups. In the pre-inspection questionnaire returns, a few parents indicated some dissatisfaction with the information they receive about their child's academic progress, and the frequency of meetings. Inspectors judge that the school provides good information to parents about the progress of their child.

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

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

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

- 6.1 The school makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. As a result, all pupils reach, and most exceed, the expected level of development typical for their age. Baseline assessments, meticulous recording of observations and outstanding electronic tracking enable the staff, who know the children extremely well, to make individual plans allowing for all areas of learning to be covered at each child's individual pace. This also ensures that early interventions can be secured using outside agencies for those children with SEND and/or EAL, and also the more able, who will need extra pace and challenge. Children under the age of three are prepared thoroughly for the next stage covering the three prime areas of developing personal, physical and communication skills. For children over three, the curriculum covers all seven areas of learning and, in Reception, introduction of specialist teaching in French and PE adds to the skills they acquire to help them be ready for the next stage.
- 6.2 Children respond to the high expectations of the staff as they enthusiastically take part in all activities. This was seen in a Reception session where initiatives taken by the children not only altered the focus of the lesson, but was fully supported by the teachers as they changed direction to enable the class to produce an item that would trap the 'Evil Pea'. All children were highly motivated in this project which spilled over into the outdoors for production of the trap. In the Nursery, the under threes were excited as they set off on their walk to the play park nearby. This provided the children with new things to explore, the chance to learn about road safety, and opportunities to listen to and respond to instructions. Individual profiles are produced using the astute observations of the staff as well as the accurate tracking system, and these inform staff and parents about each child's progress and help plan the next steps.
- 6.3 Parents are closely involved with the setting right from the beginning. Meeting with parents during the inspection and noting their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, inspectors are clear that they are highly supportive of the school.

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

- 6.4 Provision for the children's well-being is outstanding. Each child has a key person throughout the whole of EYFS, who establishes a strong bond with both the parents and child to ensure secure settling-in and well-being. The under-threes learn to sit at a table and begin to communicate and play together, and their physical development is enhanced by an exceptionally well-equipped outdoor area. They learn to sing songs, including the 'hand-washing song', which is an important part of their learning about personal hygiene. In the summer, visits to Pre-Reception help them in the smooth transition to the next stage.
- 6.5 Children are happy in the setting, as can be seen by the way they work and play industriously, both individually and co-operatively. They listen well and respond to instructions, achieving high standards of behaviour, as they offer to help, share and take turns. For children over three, the outstanding outdoor areas, together with the

specialist PE sessions in Reception, ensure substantial opportunities for physical development. This, together with high quality teaching, enables children of all ages to learn about keeping safe and understand that healthy eating is also a prerequisite of a healthy lifestyle. The transition from Pre-Reception to Reception and then into Year 1 is seamless as the children of all the relevant years play together and engage in joint activities.

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

- 6.6 Leadership and management are good. The high quality resources both inside and in the developed outside areas are evidence of strong financial support by the governors and generously supplemented by the fund-raising of the parent teacher association. The care of the children is given a very high priority and the safeguarding procedures and child protection training are thorough and meticulously recorded. Deficiencies in the safeguarding policy were brought to the attention of the school and remedied swiftly. Staff are checked on appointment and the results recorded as required, and receive child protection training regularly as part of a rolling programme. Most hold paediatric first aid certificates.
- 6.7 Comprehensive supervision procedures support all members of this close-knit, caring staff who frequently attend training as part of their professional development. They also meet regularly to assess the success of the setting, and are constantly making plans for improvement that will benefit the learning and development of the children. The setting has close links with parents and local agencies, so that the children receive the extra support they might need.

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

- 6.8 The overall quality and standards are outstanding. All children are happy, clearly enjoy their time in the setting and at all ages, most make better than expected progress from a wide range of starting points. Children under the age of three play together and make friends, and are becoming more independent as they are able to do more for themselves. They are able to recognise their name and remember the main features of simple stories. They act upon simple instructions such as, 'Run to the next tree and stop', when in the play park. They realise that if the instruction is not carried out, there will be consequences such as having to hold hand with others again. By the end of Nursery, children are able to write their own name, recognising all the letters in their own and other children's names as they are beginning to read the written word. Children order and count up to ten and most recognise the numbers on a clock face. The three outdoor areas enable children to develop a variety of physical skills such as balancing, running and climbing. Moving from one themed room to another is an important part of their becoming more independent as they learn to cope with change.
- 6.9 By the end of Reception, profile scores show that most children make better than expected progress and exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Most are reading at a level above their chronological age and are writing sentences independently, being aware of punctuation. They count to 20 and above, and can add and subtract single digit numbers. Problem-solving is embedded in most of the play activities such as running a shop or weighing ingredients for cooking. Children throw, catch and balance, and show that they understand about spatial awareness as they run and play around outside.

- 6.10 They are developing into independent individuals who are able to make choices about what activity they want to do, for example, of what to eat at lunch. They respect one another and celebrate one another's successes. Children are good listeners and respond well to instructions and answer questions clearly as they become more articulate. Throughout the EYFS, the detailed tracking system identifies those children who have SEND and extra help is provided. The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding and they are clearly very happy in the setting. They work and play together cheerfully and busily, helping where needed, sharing ideas and showing respect for one another. They talk happily to one another and to adults, and make any visitor to the setting most welcome.
- 6.11 All members of the staff make the children's safeguarding and welfare a high priority and all requirements have been met fully. The team has a shared understanding and responsibility of how to protect children, and meets regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of the setting, using their considerable knowledge of the children and the data from the detailed tracking system. This information is used to plan for the future. This is evidence of a strong commitment to continuing future development.

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

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

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