



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

ST CRISPIN'S SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Crispin's School

Full Name of School	St Crispin's School	
DfE Number	856/6000	
EYFS Number	EY390200	
Address	6 St Mary's Road Leicester Leicestershire LE2 1XA	
Telephone Number	0116 2707648	
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Email Address	enquiries@stcrispins.co.uk	
Joint Heads	Mr John Lofthouse and Mrs Denise Lofthouse	
Proprietors	Mr John Lofthouse and Mrs Denise Lofthouse	
Age Range	2 to 16	
Total Number of Pupils	131	
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (88 boys; 43 girls)	
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	13
	5-11:	46
	3-5 (EYFS):	21
	11-16:	51
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	131
Number of Boarders	Total:	0
EYFS Gender	Mixed	
Inspection Dates	17 Mar 2015 to 20 Mar 2015	

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. This is the school's first ISI inspection. The most recent full-school inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in May 2009 and Ofsted also carried out an inspection of the Nursery School, or Early Years setting, in September 2011.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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 proprietors, 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

Mr Paul Spillane

Mrs Pamela Simmonds

Mr Steven Pearce

Miss Patricia Griffin

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Headmistress, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Head of Faculty, SofH school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Crispin's is a co-educational day school, offering sessional care and education for children from two years of age and full-time education for children between the ages of three and sixteen. It founded in 1945 and merged with Richmond House School in 1990. St Crispin's School occupies two large adjacent Victorian houses in the Stoneygate area of Leicester. The present proprietors took over the school in 2001 and are joint heads, being the headmistress and the bursar.
- 1.2 The school aims to help all pupils to achieve their full potential, both academically and socially, with the emphasis being on praise and reward. It seeks to encourage its pupils to work hard, to play well, to believe in themselves and to recognise their own ability to achieve. The school states that it places great emphasis on the development of the whole child.
- 1.3 There are 34 children in the Early Years setting, 46 pupils in the junior school and 51 pupils in the senior school. Of the children in the Early Years setting, 18 are part-time and 16 full-time. There are about twice as many boys as girls in the school. Pupils come from the city and from further afield. A wide range of ethnic backgrounds is represented.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is in line with the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. Three pupils have formal education and health care plans. The school is registered with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils (CReSTeD), so that the needs of dyslexic pupils are specifically addressed. The school has identified 44 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and of these 12 receive specialist support. One pupil has a formal statement of special educational needs. Of the five pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), two receive specialist help with their English.
- 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 Pupils benefit greatly from the education which they receive at the school, which achieves a good measure of success in fulfilling its ambitious aims. The pupils' positive attitude to their studies and committed, effective teaching are reflected in good progress at all levels and solid academic achievement in public examinations. As they move up the school, pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, increasingly display knowledge and understanding appropriate to their abilities and needs. They respond willingly to the academic challenges and participate with enthusiasm in an extra-curricular programme which is somewhat limited in scope.
- 2.2 The school provides a happy, safe environment in which the staff know their charges extremely well and provide pastoral care of high quality. They understand the needs of each individual and serve their interests with careful attention. The school is particularly successful in instilling confidence and self-belief in pupils who join with a record of underachievement or unhappiness elsewhere. This accords with the school's aim that pupils should come to believe in themselves and recognise their own ability to achieve. Pupils get on very well together. Parents commend the high standards of behaviour and the evidence of the inspection fully supports this view. Pupils develop emotional maturity and leave the school very well prepared for the next stage.
- 2.3 That the school's aims are being well realised is a strong testimony to its dedicated governance, leadership and management. Taking their lead from the top, staff put the best interests of the pupils at the heart of their work. Efficient management ensures that the school runs smoothly from day to day. The school satisfies the regulatory requirements, including those which relate to safeguarding and child protection. The school has also met the recommendations of the previous inspection report with regard to information and communication technology (ICT) and the tracking of pupils' academic progress, but the marking and presentation of work are not yet of a consistently good standard. The school enjoys extremely good relations with parents, who express great satisfaction with the education that their children are receiving and the way in which the school is being run.

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

1. Ensure that all of the facilities are of a good standard.
2. Ensure that the presentation and marking of pupils' work is consistently well done.
3. Consider establishing a formal forum for the expression of pupils' views.
4. In the EYFS, improve the quality of the outdoor classroom.

5. In the EYFS, set out formally and implement the arrangements for the supervision of staff.

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' achievement and learning is good.
- 3.2 From the EYFS onwards, pupils are well educated, in accordance with the school's aim that they should fulfil their academic potential. Throughout the school, and taking into account their ability and particular needs, pupils achieve well in their learning. Standards of logical thought, applications of mathematics, literacy and proficiency in ICT are good, and art and speaking and listening skills are particularly strong. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, reach appropriate levels of knowledge, skill and understanding of the material covered in their lessons. In recent years many pupils with SEND have achieved GCSE grades which have enabled them to proceed to A-level study and university degree courses. Individual pupils have won representative honours in sports such as swimming and cross-country running, and some have gained awards in speech, drama and creative writing.
- 3.3 The school enters pupils for Key Stage 1 and 2 tests and ability is measured using CAT tests. Results in National Curriculum tests at the age of 7 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools. Performance from year to year varies, owing to the small year group sizes, where individual scores have a significant bearing on the statistical results. Results in National Curriculum tests at the age of 11 have been below the national average for maintained primary schools, but again the statistical significance of small year group sizes can lead to marked variations, and indeed the pupils who took the tests in 2013 attained results which were well above the average for maintained primary schools. At all stages up to GCSE, pupils' attainment cannot be reliably measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national norm because of the low numbers in the age groups, but on the evidence available, drawn from work scrutiny, lesson observation, interviews with pupils and background data supplied by the school, it is judged to be broadly similar to national age-related expectations.
- 3.4 GCSE results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools, with results improving since 2011, and in 2013 they were above the national average for maintained schools. Boys' results have been stronger than girls' results each year. This represents good, and in some cases, a high rate of progress being maintained in the junior and senior schools. The level of attainment at GCSE indicates that overall pupils make progress that is appropriate in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, with progress in 2013 being judged as good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Progress made by pupils with SEND and EAL has been good and, in some cases, rapid, thanks in no small part to the small class sizes and close individual attention from staff with expertise in special needs education. On the whole, the ablest pupils have tended to fulfil their potential, attaining A and A* grades at GCSE. From their responses to the questionnaires, most of the pupils and almost all of their parents are pleased with the progress being made.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, pupils' attitude to learning is positive. On the whole, they display a diligent and enthusiastic approach to their studies, including those who find their academic work very challenging. Pupils engage with their other assignments and activities in a spirited manner, willing to participate and displaying perseverance and determination.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is sound.
- 3.7 The academic curriculum is balanced and suits the needs and aptitudes of most pupils; the educational programmes in the EYFS meet the needs of the children attending. All children from Year 1 upwards are taught the NC for small schools which is a two year rolling programme. Specialist subject teachers for PE, ICT and music teach all the children from Reception, F2 upwards. Pupils benefit from being taught by subject specialists from year 3 in PE, ICT, Music, Art, French, History and Science.
- 3.8 Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) follows a good, wide-ranging scheme of work up to Year 9, and citizenship is being progressively incorporated into subjects across the curriculum, to the benefit of pupils' wider education. PSHEE is not formally taught in Years 10 or 11 and there is no planned constructive use of tutor time in those year groups. The economic element of PSHEE is thin, as is the integrated promotion of British values. Cross-curricular links are generally strong. In teaching the functional skills programme to all pupils in Year 7 upwards, the school meets the recommendation of the previous inspection that the school should improve the opportunities for learning in ICT. Reading is strongly encouraged throughout the school and pupils appreciate the large stock of books for their enjoyment. The academic curriculum is further enriched by field trips and visits to places of cultural interest.
- 3.9 Central to the effectiveness of the academic provision is the small size of the school, which enables individual pupils to receive personal attention in their lessons, where the work can be pitched at the right level for them. Pupils with SEND are very well supported, in accordance with the school's status as being nationally registered as making special provision for dyslexic pupils and its stated aim that all pupils should fulfil their academic potential. Where necessary, pupils receive specialist tuition and all teachers are aware of their special needs and/or disabilities. The register of the ablest pupils includes details of additional work which they are given, but some of these pupils are not always further challenged by more exacting assignments.
- 3.10 Informed and helpful careers guidance is appropriate to a school whose pupils have a wide span of abilities and aptitudes, and whose next stage might be, for instance, a vocational course or an apprenticeship or A-level study at a school or sixth form college.
- 3.11 Though relatively limited in scope, the extra-curricular programme is nonetheless much enjoyed. Team spirit is fostered in a good variety of sports, in the two annual plays and in house competitions. Other activities include prose and verse speaking, chess and creative dance. Pupils take part in a number of local sports tournaments. The school raises money for a wide variety of charities and pupils take genuine pride in such activities. Links with the community include carol singing for elderly local residents and visits from representatives of various faiths and organisations, including an astronomer from the university on the day of the solar eclipse.
- 3.12 Most of the pupil respondents to the questionnaire agreed that they could join in a good range of activities and almost all of the parents said that their children were offered an appropriate range of subjects and areas of experience.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution made by teaching to the achievement and learning of pupils throughout the school is good.
- 3.14 Teaching is generally successful in promoting pupils' progress and supporting the aims of the school. Small teaching groups and the teachers' understanding of the needs of individual pupils enable good progress to be made by the majority of pupils and in a number of lessons seen, this progress was judged to be excellent. Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, teachers have high expectations of pupils and lessons are carefully planned with useful detail. In many lessons the pace was well matched to the needs of pupils, sometimes moving more slowly for consolidation, particularly in the case of those with SEND, but more usually achieving a brisk pace to stimulate and engage pupils. Explanation is clear and pupils are encouraged to work together effectively in pairs or small groups to discuss the work in hand.
- 3.15 Teachers' subject knowledge is generally excellent and much expertise was observed in support of pupils' learning. Targeted questioning is used well by teachers in some lessons, encouraging pupils to think for themselves, present balanced arguments and generate their own ideas. This was used to good effect in assessing pupils' understanding and enabling their rapid progress. Examples were seen of teaching that employed varied tasks and activities that stimulated and challenged pupils to fulfil their potential and achieve high standards. In the very best lessons, carefully planned teaching fosters independence and promotes a high rate of progress. In a small minority of lessons, overly directed teaching limited opportunities for the most able to take responsibility for their own learning. Some use of ICT was observed in support of pupils' learning, but its use is not extensive.
- 3.16 Teachers set appropriate and challenging targets and pupils' progress is rigorously monitored against these. Throughout the school, teachers make regular use of tests to assess pupils' progress and inform teaching. Pupils appreciate that this helps them to understand their progress and identify areas for improvement. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported by specialist teaching and in lessons, and evidence from lesson observations confirmed that the progress of such pupils was at least as good as others in the class.
- 3.17 In a number of subjects, pupils present their work clearly and accurately, and the marking of their work is rigorous and diagnostic, which helps further to support their progress. The quality of marking and the clarity of presentation in books, however, lack consistency throughout the school and as a consequence do not always support pupils' progress in line with the aims of the school. The monitoring of marking and presentation in books were recommended features for improvement in the previous inspection report.

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 personal development of the pupils is good.
- 4.2 Pupils in all age groups, from the EYFS onwards, exhibit well-developed personal skills in accordance with the school's aim to encourage pupils to believe in themselves and recognise their own ability. Pupils' self-confidence is actively promoted by the school through opportunities to perform in front of others in drama and assemblies and through participation in house and school sports teams. Pupils with SEND and EAL are encouraged to raise matters which may cause anxiety and so prevent them from confidently tackling their work. They gain the confidence to persevere with topics they find difficult, supported by sympathetic help from members of staff. The pupils develop well within an atmosphere of mutual support, where success is celebrated. During the inspection, pupils expressed pride in their school during interviews. They are emotionally mature for their age and show sensitivity to the needs of others.
- 4.3 Pupils have strong moral awareness. They understand the difference between right and wrong and show respect for their teachers and their peers. This is promoted through, for instance, topics in PSHEE such as taking responsibility for their own actions and by extra-curricular activities which include the opportunity to join the human rights group. As they move into the senior school, pupils develop an appreciation of the over-arching nature of the civil and criminal law of England and of the importance of individual liberty, through study of topics such as democracy and citizenship and a visit to the school by a local magistrate. Pupils' moral and ethical awareness is promoted through discussion of topics such as sex and relationships and friendship. They develop understanding of the importance of rules in society through discussion of the school's 'golden rules'.
- 4.4 Pupils are polite and behave well both during lessons and around the school. They develop an understanding of social responsibility as they move up the school, in line with the school's aim to develop the whole child. Pupils are articulate and converse freely with adults, the older ones showing personal responsibility and pride by taking on leadership roles as team captains, house captains, prefects, head girl and head boy. They also support younger pupils by helping with activities such as netball or acting as a listening ear when younger pupils have problems in the playground. Pupils help to raise money for a range of charities, and show appreciation of the needs of others in the wider community. They develop some economic awareness through organising stalls and raising money at the school fete. Partly through visits from, for instance, a local magistrate and police officers, pupils acquire an understanding of and respect for British values, institutions and public services, although this is not systematically included in the PSHEE syllabus.
- 4.5 Pupils of many ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds coexist harmoniously at the school, and they effortlessly absorb an excellent appreciation of Western cultural traditions, but also cultural diversity, tolerance of difference and respect for others' cultures and beliefs. This is further supported by the study of world religions in religious studies lessons, visits to local places of worship and by special events such as the celebration of Chinese New Year. Pupils reported that no discrimination was tolerated in the school.

- 4.6 Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and exhibit excellent personal development by the time they leave the school.

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

- 4.7 The pastoral care of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.8 The school provides a happy, safe environment in which pupils can, in accordance with its stated aim, work hard, play well and believe in themselves, including in the EYFS. The teachers know the academic, social and emotional needs of the pupils extremely well. An established, informal system of close pastoral care is supported by clear policies which are successfully implemented. Care is of a high order because communication among staff in this small school is frequent and well informed, so that pupils' needs are immediately given full and due attention. A small minority of those pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that teachers did not show concern for them as a person and that there was not a member of staff or a pupil to whom they could turn with a difficulty. This was not borne out during the inspection, when all those interviewed were confident that there was always an adult who would lend a sympathetic ear and offer advice, reassurance and guidance.
- 4.9 Relationships among the pupils are excellent, based on mutual trust and support. Friendships are strong. The school is very successful in promoting good behaviour. This was observed during the inspection and supported by all the parents who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils said that bullying was not an issue and they were confident that any incident would be dealt with swiftly and fairly. The log of misdemeanours records very few episodes of bullying in the recent past. A minority of the pupil respondents to the questionnaire stated that staff were unfair in the way they gave rewards and a majority said that they were unfair in the way that they gave sanctions. The evidence of the inspection did not support either view. Pupils understand and like the system of rewards and they accept that the school rules are relatively strict, but those interviewed did not feel that either rewards or sanctions were unfairly or disproportionately meted out.
- 4.10 Healthy eating and exercise are promoted. A breakfast club encourages pupils to start the day with a meal. Pupils bring their own lunches; sweets, fizzy drinks and nuts are banned. Healthy snacks are provided during the day. Pupils can eat the produce they have grown in the school vegetable garden. Break times see pupils of all ages playing energetically in the playgrounds, and they benefit from a suitable programme of sport and physical exercise at various venues during the week.
- 4.11 The three-year plan to improve access for pupils with SEND is appropriately detailed and wide-ranging for the needs of those who attend and who are likely to attend the school.
- 4.12 A majority of the pupil respondents to the questionnaire felt that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. The evidence of the inspection does not support this: there have been pupil surveys and senior staff have introduced changes and improvements in response to suggestions by pupils. There is not, however, a formal forum, such as a school council, for the regular expression of pupils' views.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.

- 4.14 Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are seen as being of central importance. They cover all aspects of the life of the school, including the EYFS. Clear procedures for safeguarding pupils and eliminating discrimination are implemented highly effectively. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection at specified intervals. Cases involving the welfare of pupils are conscientiously and professionally managed.
- 4.15 The medical room satisfies regulatory requirements. No medication is administered by staff. Pupils who are ill or injured during the school day are collected by their parents and detailed records of such cases are filed. All staff have access to a list, with photographs, of pupils who suffer from allergies or chronic conditions. Ten members of staff are trained in first aid, nine of whom are trained to the higher level.
- 4.16 A range of excellent policies and procedures promotes a safe environment. Risk assessments are comprehensive for relevant activities in and out of school. Electrical equipment is monitored through portable appliance testing. All reasonable precautions are taken to eliminate the risk from fire. The termly practices are fully recorded and alarms are tested weekly. External specialists regularly check fire prevention and fire-fighting equipment. In recent years staff have attended many training courses covering a wide range of topics related to welfare, health and safety.
- 4.17 Pupils are very well educated with regard to personal safety. They receive instruction on, for instance, road safety, cycling skills and drugs awareness. The fire brigade and other external bodies give regular talks. Pupils' access to the internet is filtered and they are taught about e-safety.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. There is a system of immediate response if a pupil is absent.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 As the proprietors of the school are its joint heads, in the roles of headmistress and bursar, they are responsible not only for leadership and management but also for what would otherwise be the remit of the governing body. Wholeheartedly committed to the fortunes of the school, they provide good support and challenge at all levels, including in the EYFS setting. With their close involvement in every aspect of the life of the school, they exercise effective oversight of educational standards and resources; financial and strategic planning; investment in teaching and ancillary staff; welfare, health and safety; and child protection. On the whole, premises are well maintained, but a few areas, such as the boys' lavatories, fall below the standards of the rest.
- 5.3 School policies are extremely detailed and thorough. Recent revisions to the wording of a few of the policies have ensured that they conform to the current regulatory requirements and at the beginning of the inspection they were all compliant. Policies have been regularly reviewed and updated by the proprietors, but the annual review of the safeguarding policies and procedures is not formally recorded. The school development plan is straightforward and practical.
- 5.4 The proprietors regularly attend local area meetings and courses further afield in order to ensure that they keep abreast of educational developments. They draw on the expertise of external agencies for the management and monitoring of aspects of health, safety and human resources.

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 Leadership and management throughout the school, including in the EYFS, are of a high standard, in accordance with the views of the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire. The school is led with devoted care, and senior management works purposefully and conscientiously to promote the school's vision. The good all-round quality of education and the excellent pastoral care provided for pupils reflect the example set by leadership and management to the staff, who display a high level of dedication and commitment.
- 5.7 The school is well run on a day-to-day basis, ensuring a learning environment in which pupils are secure and where they enjoy good teaching and resources. Close communications at all levels within the school ensure a sense of corporate involvement and purpose; they also enable matters of concern to be resolved at an early stage. The accessibility of management and all staff is appreciated by pupils and parents. Through creating a strong sense of community, senior management has created a culture of trust and co-operation which is endorsed by all who work in the school.

- 5.8 Leadership and management have implemented detailed policies and procedures for all aspects of school life which ensure the provision of a good, safe educational experience. The process of recruitment of staff follows the stipulated steps and the single central register of appointments is accurately completed. Induction training for all staff and volunteers follows the prescribed procedures: they have a clear understanding of their statutory obligations, especially for child protection, and the school complies with all the required regulations.
- 5.9 Leadership successfully keeps up to date with regulatory and curricular developments. It actively promotes the continuing professional development of the staff, who are encouraged to attend courses and obtain further qualifications which will be beneficial to them and to the school. Staff develop their skills through many appropriate training sessions, both in school and beyond. There is a sound programme of lesson observation and staff appraisal. Several aspects of management which in other schools would be established on a formal basis are dealt with informally at St Crispin's. There are few timetabled and minuted meetings, but the highly visible presence of senior management around the school means that matters of interest and importance are continually being raised and discussed at the highest level. Staff say that they are comfortable with this arrangement and that their various needs are met.
- 5.10 One of the recommendations in the previous inspection report referred to marking and presentation: the quality of the marking of pupils' work continues to be uneven and there is inconsistency in the standards of written presentation required by subject teachers. An excellent system for tracking pupils' progress and the setting of suitably attainable and demanding targets is being successfully introduced. Leadership celebrates excellence: pupils' significant achievements, including merit awards, certificates for excellent work and notable extra-curricular successes, are celebrated in a weekly assembly and are formally collated in individual records of achievement.
- 5.11 Links with parents, carers and guardians are extremely good. The strong partnership created with the parents of the youngest children is maintained as pupils progress through the school. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents were highly supportive of all aspects of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the information they receive about the school, the way concerns are handled and the timely responses to questions asked, and they would certainly recommend the school to other parents.
- 5.12 Staff are readily available to parents and the school's 'open door' policy allows the vast majority of queries or concerns to be dealt with swiftly and informally. Equally, staff can be contacted by email and they respond promptly. The school's policy for handling complaints is available to parents and the school adheres to the stated procedures. The very few recorded complaints were resolved promptly and professionally.
- 5.13 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. Daily contact books, homework diaries and other means of daily contact ensure beneficial communication between home and school. Parents are encouraged to attend concerts, drama productions and sports matches. The particular expertise of parents is used when appropriate to enhance the wider curriculum.

- 5.14 A still developing website, school prospectus and welcome packs provide all current and prospective parents with detailed and relevant information. Induction days ensure that a warm welcome is extended to new pupils and their parents. Termly newsletters and the highly effective 'parent mail' keep current parents up to date with all school activities.
- 5.15 As well as a parents' evening in the spring term, parents receive two reports a year. These are of high quality, giving details of the syllabuses covered, close analysis of pupils' progress, information about effort and behaviour, and realistic and helpful targets for improvement.
- 5.16 Parents are highly satisfied with the education provided for their children.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 6.1 The setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. The committed and caring staff know all children very well and cater effectively for their individual needs. Consistently good standards are achieved through an appropriately planned curriculum which helps most children to reach age-appropriate levels of development. All children are well supported, including those with additional needs; they make good progress and are well prepared for each stage of their learning.
- 6.2 Careful planning, matched to individual learning goals, and regular assessments enable next steps to be identified and implemented. There is a suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning to meet individual needs and stages of development. For the younger children, appropriate emphasis is placed on the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development) to ensure that they develop key skills, which are reinforced as they progress through the setting. All children benefit from specialist teaching in physical education, and for the older children ICT and music are added. Adults engage and motivate children through a variety of learning opportunities indoors and when possible outside. The outside area is a shared space which limits availability and it has been identified by the school for further improvement.
- 6.3 Relationships with parents are strong and a real partnership is established which has a beneficial impact on children's learning and development, as seen in individual reading records. Parents were very positive about the setting in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Detailed reports give helpful information to inform parents about their child's progress in all areas of learning. Induction days and good communication between home and school ensure that the children settle easily into 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. Welfare is given high priority and all children, including those under three and those with additional needs, are extremely well cared for. Effective use of the key person system builds strong relationships between staff, the children and their families. Great importance is placed on children's happiness.
- 6.5 The children play well together, learning to co-operate, share and look after one another. They enjoy their learning and become increasingly independent and inquisitive, especially when outside. Clear boundaries and high expectations promote excellent standards of behaviour. The children are taught how to keep themselves safe; they are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to be increasingly responsible for their own personal hygiene. A positive attitude to physical exercise is promoted.

- 6.6 Transitions between different stages are carefully managed and ensure that all children are sensitively prepared for the next stage of their learning. The family atmosphere that pervades the setting makes a positive contribution to this process.

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

- 6.7 The quality of leadership and management is good. The headmistress, who is also head of the EYFS, is closely involved and supportive of the setting. She has a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the EYFS and visits regularly. The experience and skills of senior EYFS staff are utilised to the full. They, along with the head, form an informal leadership and management team, ensuring that all learning and development responsibilities are met. They share a clear and realistic vision for the continuous improvement of the setting, particularly the development of the outside classroom. Regular self-evaluation allows appropriate targets to be set. Managers support staff through informal supervision arrangements, but these are not clearly set out and recorded. Appraisals identify training needs and these are provided whenever possible.
- 6.8 The children's well-being and safeguarding are given high priority. Thorough induction procedures and regular training mean that all staff are fully aware of current safeguarding and health and safety protocols. Children are well cared for in a welcoming and safe environment.
- 6.9 Strong partnerships have been established with parents and with external agencies, and this greatly contributes to the progress and achievement of all children.

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

- 6.10 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are good. Much of the setting's success is due to the dedicated and caring staff. Children of all abilities and needs generally make good progress in relation to their individual starting points because of the encouragement and support they receive. The varied learning opportunities and the level of care provided for children under three enable them to become enthusiastic and happy learners. They enjoy songs, rhymes and stories, they begin to know colours and to express their needs. As children progress through the setting, they express themselves with increasing confidence and listen attentively.
- 6.11 Reception children display a developing knowledge of phonics which they use with increasing competence, when they are writing simple words and sentences. They are beginning to read. They work confidently with numbers to twenty and can do simple addition and subtraction sums. Children use computers with increasing independence for a range of tasks.
- 6.12 The personal development of all children is excellent. They are happy, well behaved and self-confident. They develop good relationships with their friends and the adults who care for them. They know right from wrong, share and co-operate. The celebration of different cultural festivals develops mutual understanding and respect. Welfare and safeguarding procedures are secure, and risk assessments and fire procedures are well known, ensuring that the children are safe and secure. Senior leaders are effective in evaluating practice and planning for continuous improvement. The setting provides all children with firm foundations for future learning and personal development.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.13 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.