



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
CAVERSHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Caversham Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Caversham Preparatory School
DfE Number	870/6009
Address	Caversham Preparatory School 16 Peppard Road Caversham Reading Berkshire RG4 8JZ
Telephone Number	01189 478684
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Email Address	secretary@cavershamschool.com
Head	Mrs Jacqueline Simpson Lawson
Proprietors	Mrs Jacqueline Simpson Lawson Mr Ian Dermot Lawson
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	89
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (38 boys; 51 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 25 5-11: 64
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Zoe Abraham
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	17 Jun 2014 to 20 Jun 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The school has not been inspected previously by ISI. The previous inspection by Ofsted was in July 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, 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. 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. 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 Elaine Brook

Mrs Linda Griffith

Mrs Kirsten Jackson

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)

Coordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Caversham Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls. Situated in the town of Caversham near Reading, the school offers education for children aged from three to eleven years; currently the oldest pupils are in Year 5. Founded in 1993 as Chiltern College School, it is situated in its own grounds within the Chiltern College campus which offers Nursery provision and training in childcare. The school was purchased by the present owners in 2009 and renamed. It is a family business, owned by two proprietors whose professional experience is in education and business and who act as headteacher and bursar respectively. Other family members occupy a teaching and administrative role. There is no formal board of governors; members of the family meet together informally to consider matters concerning governance. Since the previous inspection by Ofsted in 2008, the school opened a class in 2010 for children aged three who can attend up to five mornings.
- 1.2 The school's stated mission is to work with parents and pupils to provide a happy and stimulating environment in which all pupils can thrive. They aim to do this by developing pupils' full potential academically, socially and physically.
- 1.3 The main buildings were originally used as domestic dwellings and have been adapted to suit their present purpose. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is located in the main house and has a separate enclosed garden play area. There are grassed and hard-standing play areas for the rest of the school. The school has links with Chiltern College, using their facilities for physical education lessons, assemblies and catering. The school also uses the facilities of a nearby independent school for sports activities, swimming, performing arts and religious services.
- 1.4 There are 89 pupils on roll, of whom 25 are in the EYFS and 64 in Years 1 to 5. Most pupils enter the school aged three to four. Children stay in the Foundation class initially, transferring into Reception at the age of four. Following their time in the EYFS, they move into Year 1 and progress through the school. Plans to re-establish the Year 6 class in September 2014 are in place. The ability of pupils on entry is judged to be above average, with a wide spread of abilities represented. Most pupils come from professional and business backgrounds and live within a three-mile radius of the school. The majority of pupils are of white British ethnic origin, with a small minority originating from Europe or the Far East. The school is non-denominational, welcoming pupils from all major world religions as well as those who have no religious affiliation. Although no pupil has a statement of special educational needs, three pupils have been identified by the school as needing specialist support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Thirteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom requires additional learning provision.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout the report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent, fully in line with the school's aim to develop pupils' potential to the optimum. From the EYFS onwards, pupils make excellent, and sometimes exceptional, progress across the full range of the curriculum and other activities. Standards in literacy and numeracy are particularly high. In the EYFS, the majority of children reach, and many exceed, the expected Early Learning Goals. Results in national tests at the ages of seven and eleven are well above the national average; in 2013 they were exceptional. Pupils with SEND progress well because support is well targeted to meet their individual needs. Similarly, the most able attain high standards because they are offered sufficient challenge. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are diligent and focused, taking great pride in their work. Standards of provision in the EYFS are excellent. From Year 1, the curriculum provides all pupils with a rich learning experience, well supported by the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The quality of teaching is excellent and work is well matched to the varying needs of the pupils. In a few lessons only, lessons lacked pace and progress was more limited. The school has fully addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection to improve the assessment systems so that pupils take greater ownership of their learning and to increase the use of computers to enhance learning.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent and they benefit from the high quality of pastoral care they receive. In the EYFS, children can share and co-operate well together to achieve a set task. Older pupils are courteous and accepting of their own and others' strengths and weaknesses. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Relationships between older pupils and staff are supportive and respectful, so that pupils have a well developed understanding of their own culture, whilst embracing the diversity of others. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good. Pupils are well cared for and the accommodation and resources are well maintained. A small number of amendments to policies regarding welfare and the safeguarding of pupils were made. By the end of the inspection, all documentation met the latest requirements.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. The proprietors know their school well and have established a happy school with high expectations for pupils and where parents support the strong family ethos. The proprietors combine their roles with that of headteacher and bursar, so that they are fully informed of the school's needs. Governance is largely informal. This works well in terms of establishing excellent relationships but has resulted in a lack of rigour in reviewing regulatory policies. The quality of leadership and management at all levels is excellent. Senior managers lead the drive for self-assessment and review with energy and exceptional commitment. Excellent systems are in place to maintain high standards of learning but managers, including those in the EYFS, are not sufficiently conversant with all of the regulatory requirements. Collaborative management means that all staff share the school's vision for continued improvement and work well together as a cohesive team. Managers at all levels do not systematically review the quality of teaching across the curriculum so that there is some inconsistency of standards. Links with parents are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly positive about the education and care of their children.

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. Establish a more formal system for the review of regulatory policies relating to health and safety and safeguarding, and the specific requirements for the EYFS, and formally monitor their implementation.
2. Observe lessons routinely in order to ensure that the high-quality teaching evident in the majority of lessons is consistent across all subjects.

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 excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to develop their potential to the optimum. Children in the EYFS achieve highly in relation to their starting points. They enjoy their learning, talking with enthusiasm about their experiences and listening to the views of others. They are able to follow instructions and work logically through a set task appropriate to their age. They know the initial letter sounds and are beginning to blend sounds together to read and write independently. The most able are reading well at a level considerably above that expected for their age. They work confidently with numbers to ten in the Nursery and can count in twos, fives and tens in Reception class, with some children using numbers up to one hundred with confidence. They are given excellent opportunities to be creative, think independently and develop their physical abilities. Excellent progress is made towards the Early Learning Goals with most children achieving them by the age of five and many children exceeding them.
- 3.3 From Year 1, the high standards of pupils' achievement are continued in their academic and wider activities. Pupils demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and can express their thoughts with clarity, being prepared also to extend their understanding by listening well to their teacher and to their peers. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND or EAL achieve high standards of literacy, enjoying a wide range of literature and writing imaginatively and factually as required. Numeracy skills are strong; pupils can think independently and logically and enjoy solving problems in both mathematics and science. Since the previous inspection, the pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are much improved. They use ICT confidently as an integral tool to enhance their learning. They have well-developed creative skills, as seen in the excellent artwork and through their participation in music and drama. Physical skills are well developed; pupils are active and eager participants in sporting activities. Pupils who require learning support achieve high standards in line with their abilities because of targeted individual teaching where needed and the strong support they receive in the classroom. The most able pupils succeed because they receive work and activities well matched to their abilities and interests. For example, pupils showing exceptional ability in a particular subject are offered additional coaching by tutors brought into school to meet their specific needs.
- 3.4 Pupils achieve success individually and in teams. The wide range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to explore new interests and so enrich their learning. Many pupils excel in the standard they have reached in graded music examinations, speech and drama. Almost half of the pupils play a musical instrument and are given excellent opportunities to perform to the school and to the wider public. A substantial number of pupils have won academic scholarships to senior schools with high levels of entry; others have been awarded scholarships for art, music, performing arts and ICT. Pupils have a limited opportunity to compete against other schools in some sports but they acquit themselves well and are proud of their teams' efforts. Individual talent is recognised, encouraged and applauded. Arrangements are made to accommodate the learning needs of pupils with specific gifts to enable them to successfully combine elite training with the demands of academic work. For example, pupils showing exceptional talent in dance and tennis pursue their sport at the highest level for their age and are offered regular opportunities to discuss their

workload so that they are not placed under undue stress and adaptations can be made to ensure their academic progress is sustained.

- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the three years from 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of seven are well above the national average, with results in mathematics being exceptional. At the age of 11, results in national tests have been exceptional. This is mainly due to the strong performance in 2013, where all subjects were exceptional; results in 2011 to 12 were well above average. This level of attainment in literacy and numeracy, when viewed in addition to evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of work in all curriculum subjects supports the inspection team's findings that across the whole school pupils make an excellent and sometimes exceptional rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability.
- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Children in the EYFS enjoy being able to explore and investigate. From Year 1 onwards, pupils apply themselves confidently and conscientiously. Their exemplary behaviour in the classroom supports their high achievement. They are diligent and focused learners, able to work both independently and co-operatively as the situation requires. They take great pride in presenting their work well.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum strongly supports the school's aim to create a stimulating and supportive environment in which pupils' potential is developed in all areas of personal, academic, social, spiritual and moral development. The curriculum is effective in its coverage of all requisite areas of learning and enhanced by the inclusion of French throughout the school and Spanish in Year 5.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, the standards of provision are excellent so that the setting provides a happy and stimulating environment of the highest quality. A good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities promotes independence and imaginative play. Children are allowed free, supervised access to the outdoor play area which encourages strong physical co-ordination. From the start of their time in the Foundation class, the development of communication, literacy and numeracy skills are given a high priority. Phonics are taught at the start of every morning, followed by story reading and writing and number activities. This daily focus on the early acquisition of basic skills ensures that standards in oracy, literacy and numeracy are exceptionally high. All children in the setting attend school assemblies. These close links with older children facilitates transition from one class to another.
- 3.10 From Year 1, provision is largely class-based with most subjects taught by the class teacher. Each morning is primarily devoted to literacy and numeracy. This provides a strong base from which pupils' learning develops well because individual needs are well known. In addition to science, humanities and the arts, provision is enhanced by specialist tuition in music, swimming and modern foreign languages, most of which takes place in the afternoon. A comprehensive personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHEC) programme supports pupils' personal development well, fulfilling the school's aim that pupils should learn about their own environment and that of the wider locality. Care is taken to integrate subjects where relevant so that links between themes are clear to pupils. For example, the study of

birds in Year 1 encompassed stories, writing and counting activities and a visit from a local falconry as well as learning the equivalent names in French of the most common species. The inclusion of appropriate outings or visitors to the school as part of the planning for a particular topic is a strength, extending the pupils' breadth of understanding. These have included a Bollywood event to celebrate Divali and a whole school expedition to the Thames when learning about water.

- 3.11 Planning for continuity is strong as each curriculum co-ordinator is responsible for the programme in at least one subject. This ensures that important areas of learning are revisited in a cohesive and planned way. ICT is well integrated into the curriculum and also taught as a discrete subject. The school has responded well to the recommendation from the previous report by increasing the access to computers so that learning in other subjects is enhanced. In addition to the ICT suite, every classroom has a well-used interactive whiteboard, laptop and tablet technology and digital cameras. These and other resources are widely used to enhance the curriculum. Residential trips are a well organised addition to pupils' learning opportunities. These focus on teambuilding activities linked to their academic learning and are much enjoyed by the children. The vibrant classroom and corridor displays are tangible evidence of the variety of subjects and activities.
- 3.12 The curriculum is successful in meeting the needs of the range of pupils who attend the school. Provision to meet the needs of the most able is excellent. The school maintains a register, which is regularly reviewed, of those pupils for whom additional opportunities should be made available. These include extension study sessions before the school day starts, as well as the planning of challenging activities within the lesson. A bank of suitable enrichment and extension materials is provided by subject co-ordinators as part of their documentation for each subject. Provision for pupils with SEND is equally well planned, most commonly through in-class reinforcement activities to consolidate learning. Those pupils who need more intensive help are given individual sessions with a specialist tutor. The programme is organised on a rota so that participants are absent from a different lesson every week. This ensures that full access to all curriculum subjects is retained.
- 3.13 The excellent extra-curricular programme provides a wide range of options to suit all tastes. The current programme includes an eco club, chess, gardening, arts and crafts, team-building, dance and sports. Great care is taken to provide activities which are well suited to the ages and interests of the pupils so that the majority of pupils participate on most days.
- 3.14 The school has some suitable links with the local community. Pupils regularly visit a home for senior citizens to entertain or talk to the residents, thereby learning about the needs of others. Established links with schools abroad are forged when pupils leave the school to live overseas; this enables pupils to learn about cultures which may well be very different from their own.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Pupils' high levels of achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy, are attained largely as a result of the excellent teaching they receive. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND or EAL, therefore make rapid and sometimes exceptional progress, fully in line with the school's aim to develop lively, enquiring minds.

- 3.17 In the EYFS, high-quality teaching engages and motivates the children through a carefully planned, stimulating programme of activities. Staff have high expectations for their pupils. On entry to the Foundation class, each pupil's abilities are assessed so that their progress can be monitored and individual learning plans put in place which set challenging targets for future development. Staff know their children very well and this enables them to vary tasks and activities to suit individual needs. In a Reception class, pupils were able to plan out a story, using gestures and actions to consolidate their learning, then were invited to create their own version independently.
- 3.18 From Year 1, lessons are carefully planned and based on an accurate understanding of pupils' needs. The quality of marking is excellent. Constructive comments clearly show pupils how they can improve their work. Assessment in literacy and numeracy includes tracking of past progress and the setting of ambitious targets for the end of each academic year, most of which are achieved. Where observed progress does not match expectation, an individual support programme is initiated, which may involve focused support within the lesson from a staff member or additional lessons outside the normal school day. This measure has been highly effective in raising levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the assessment process by reflecting upon their own progress and agreeing areas for future improvement. In this way the school has successfully responded to the recommendation from the previous inspection that pupils should be more fully involved in their learning by self-assessing against success criteria.
- 3.19 Teachers know their subjects well and teach with energy and enthusiasm. Activities designed to challenge highly able pupils to think independently and extend their learning are evident in most lessons. A very small number of parents felt that the most able pupils were not well supported. Inspectors found no evidence to support this. Pupils reach standards in most subjects well in excess of expectation for pupils of their ages and abilities. In the best lessons, able children were encouraged to think reflectively about a problem and then given an opportunity to test out a theory and find a solution. In a lesson based on why aqueducts worked effectively, Year 5 pupils debated the construction requirements, commenting on the need for gradients and watertight materials before beginning to design a prototype. Praise and encouragement are well used to motivate pupils. The teaching includes effective use of internet materials either to aid a deeper understanding of the lesson theme or simply as an enjoyable way to consolidate learning. Most lessons moved along at a brisk pace. On the very few occasions where teaching was not excellent, pupils were not fully engaged, lessons lacked pace and relevance to the learning objective and the work was not sufficiently matched to the varying abilities of the pupils so that progress was more limited.
- 3.20 The needs of those pupils with SEND are well met because they are offered a great deal of support well matched to individual requirements either within the classroom or through one to one tuition. The high ratio of staff to pupils ensures that help is always readily available. Teaching assistants are well deployed to ensure that pupils understand and achieve the set task. Pupils with EAL receive equal care and make rapid progress in their understanding. Academically able pupils are identified from an early stage. In almost every lesson observed, great care was taken to match the level of challenge to the individual's ability, so that pupils were highly motivated to deepen their understanding and enabled to extend their learning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The personal development of the pupils strongly supports the school's commitment that pupils should aim high, believing that with help they can achieve their personal goals and be a confident member of a strong, cohesive community.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, children share well and are keen to help one another through any perceived difficulty. They can take turns and learn to take risks in an appropriately controlled safe environment such as the outside play area. They are very good at working co-operatively in a variety of tasks, such as writing clues for a guessing game or tidying up at the end of an activity. Children greatly enjoy their links with older pupils, such as in assemblies. This ensures that the transition to Year 1 is eagerly anticipated and made very smoothly.
- 4.4 Pupils' spiritual development is strong. They approach the school day happily and confidently, demonstrating emotional maturity in their dealings with one another. In discussion, they show a highly developed understanding of their own strengths but are also sufficiently self-aware to recognise that others have strengths which may exceed their own. Their knowledge and appreciation of other cultures is well developed through the PSHEC programme. Pupils understand that others may hold beliefs very different from their own and happily celebrate these by participating in events and celebrations to mark days such as the Chinese New Year. Pupils demonstrate an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life as a result of participation in music, art and drama, assemblies and outings to museums and theatres, which offer time for reflection and a growing appreciation of the beauty to be found in the world.
- 4.5 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. During their time in the school, they are helped to develop strong moral values because the importance of respecting one another and the environment lies at the heart of the school's mission statement and is promoted in general discussion and celebrated in assemblies. Pupils understand the importance of abiding by the school's simple rules and talk with assurance about the need for kindness and tolerance.
- 4.6 Pupils work well together so that their social development is outstanding. They are encouraged from the time they join the school to take on positions of responsibility appropriate to their age. The youngest children very much enjoy being pencil or register monitor whilst older pupils understand the responsibilities associated with being a school monitor and take on the role with seriousness, talking with understanding about what it means to be an ambassador for their school. They offer friendship and support to younger pupils and this is extended to the wider community through fund-raising ventures for charitable organisations. Pupils' social awareness is strongly developed through their contribution to the school council. They understand that the needs of the community should be discussed sensibly in an open forum and that decisions need to be based on what is best for the majority rather than for the individual. Older pupils are beginning to have an understanding of economic and political issues through discussions on current affairs.
- 4.7 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent. Through discussion and in lessons, pupils gain an excellent understanding of the multi-cultural society in which we live.

Pupils learn about other faiths through their religious education lessons and celebrate the diversity of culture within the school. The development of an understanding of British institutions and traditions is fostered for all children through the PSHE programme, whilst the older children have a discrete lesson devoted to a discussion of current affairs, which ensures that they have an age-appropriate understanding of global issues. Pupils benefit from an excellent programme of visits to places of interest, both locally and during residential trips.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Clear and effective policies and procedures relating to the pastoral care of all pupils, including those children in the EYFS, strongly support the aims of the school, which stress the importance of a happy and caring environment to the personal development of pupils. Relationships across the school between staff and pupils, and among the pupils themselves, are characterised by kindness and helpfulness. Each class teacher takes responsibility not only for the academic progress of each pupil but also for the personal welfare. A great deal of information is shared between staff, both formally and informally, so that support and guidance is readily available and effective in meeting the needs of all.
- 4.10 Pupils' physical needs are well met through regular participation in exercise during lessons, in the activities programme and in the playground. The use of the sports facilities and swimming pool of the adjacent school and college provides increased opportunities for physical development. Pupils of all ages have an excellent understanding of the importance of eating healthily. A nutritious lunch is provided in the dining room of Chiltern College, although pupils are not able to choose a portion size.
- 4.11 The school's systems to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying are highly effective. Emphasis is placed on positively rewarding pupils who behave well, and great enjoyment is gained from receiving recognition as star of the week during the assembly held to celebrate achievement. In their response to the questionnaire, pupils and parents say that the systems of reward and sanctions are understood by all and fairly administered. Pupils report that cases of bullying are minimal and they agree that they would receive support and help from any of the adults involved in their daily care.
- 4.12 Suitable policies outline procedures for pupils with SEND. Prior to the inspection, a three-year plan to improve access for these pupils to accommodation, curriculum and information had not been detailed. This omission had been rectified by the end of the inspection.
- 4.13 The school council is a highly effective conduit for enabling pupils to air their views. In their response to the questionnaire, all pupils felt that the school listened to and valued their thoughts on how the school should develop. Their suggestions are acted upon wherever possible and reasons for a decision or a necessary timescale are outlined in an assembly. For example, the school council's request for a greater range of outdoor activities and equipment resulted in a considerable increase in playground resources, much appreciated by the pupils.

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 Efficient, practical arrangements for the whole school, including the EYFS, ensure that pupils are well cared for in a safe environment, in line with the school's aim to promote pupils' wellbeing. Prior to the inspection, policies to safeguard pupils had not been kept fully up-to-date with recent changes in regulatory requirements. The school acted immediately to rectify this and by the end of the inspection all documentation complied with the latest official guidance. All staff, including in the EYFS, receive appropriate training in the safeguarding of pupils and useful links have been established with local agencies.
- 4.16 Regular risk assessments and checks of all areas ensure the day to day safety of all the children. Any maintenance matters are dealt with promptly and efficiently; the site is well maintained. Staff take great care in lessons and activities to promote health and safety matters. In the EYFS children's welfare is of paramount importance and they are taken great care of in a safe environment. They learn how to assess risks in their activities and discuss what can be done to minimise these, for example by separating the area for playing with balls.
- 4.17 The school has taken all necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Regular evacuation practices are carried out and the results recorded. Electrical testing is completed on an annual basis by a specialist firm. The school has engaged the services of an external agency to report on health and safety matters. All recommendations have been followed.
- 4.18 The first aid arrangements are appropriate and make suitable provision for pupils with SEND. Good facilities for pupils who are injured or sick are in place and careful records of any accidents are maintained. A sufficient number of staff have received training in first aid. The requirement that at least one staff member should have paediatric training has now been met.
- 4.19 The admission register is suitably maintained and stored correctly for the previous three years. Attendance registers are completed twice daily but do not always include an explanation for absence. This has been rectified in line with current regulations. The school has a good system for contacting parents in case of any pupil absence to make sure that the child is safe.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Both proprietors are fully involved in the life of the school. Their careful governance ensures that the school remains true to its aim to work with parents and pupils to provide a happy and stimulating environment in which all pupils can thrive and achieve their potential. Working closely together on a daily basis, and supported in matters of education and administration by other family members, they have been the motivating factor in setting high educational standards whilst investing prudently and appropriately in staff, accommodation and learning resources. The proprietors combine their roles with those as headteacher and bursar and this gives them a deep insight into the work of the school so that they understand its needs and can spend funds wisely to enhance curriculum provision.
- 5.3 The proprietors have put in place a comprehensive school development plan which is the result of consultation with all chief stakeholders, including parents, staff and pupils. This process acts as a stimulus for whole school improvement based on realistic expectations. Together the proprietors have been highly successful in appointing staff who work as a team to further the aims of the school and who feel supported and challenged by their involvement and interest.
- 5.4 The proprietors have created a happy school, based on family values, where children are safe and thrive within a warm and encouraging community. Some monitoring and recording of policies and their implementation has been largely informal resulting in minor deficiencies in content of policies concerning welfare, health and safeguarding of pupils. The proprietors acted promptly during the inspection to make necessary amendments and all were satisfactorily resolved by the end of the inspection.

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 excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management at all levels are highly successful in achieving the aims of the school, thereby promoting the excellent achievement and personal development of pupils. In interviews and in their response to the questionnaires, parents expressed their appreciation of the open and welcoming atmosphere in the school. This is evident when pupils are greeted by name at the door by senior leaders and continues with staff being readily available to discuss any concerns either personally or by email. The outcome is that this is a relaxed and welcoming environment where pupils make excellent and sometimes exceptional progress. Parents enjoy being part of their child's progress within a tightly knit community. Because of their dual role in governance as well as leadership, the headteacher and bursar work together with exceptional clarity of purpose, providing clear educational direction focused on addressing the needs of each individual pupil. Much of the business of the school is conducted informally, with advice and support readily offered by other family members. This works well in terms of making strategic plans for the future because all involved share the same vision for development. It is less

effective in formulating requisite policies and procedures. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure the welfare, health and safeguarding of pupils so that they are safe and well cared for but timely procedures to remain abreast of and update policies in line with current regulatory requirements are not firmly embedded.

- 5.7 The recent establishment of a senior management team with responsibilities for oversight of specific year groups of pupils has ensured that systems to track the academic progress of all pupils, including those in the EYFS, are rigorous, thereby fully meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. Managers at all levels do not systematically monitor the quality of teaching in all year groups so do not have a clear overview of the effectiveness of provision. This leads to some inconsistency of standards in some subjects. Great care is taken to select good quality staff and all appropriate recruitment procedures for assessing the suitability of all involved in working with children are now in place. Minor administrative omissions were rectified by the end of the inspection. Regularly updated training, and careful induction procedures, ensure that all staff receive appropriate guidance in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. Clear handbooks inform them about the school's aims, procedures and expectations. The well established appraisal system plays a significant role in identifying staff requirements for professional development and training. Teachers and support assistants are well deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' successful progress.
- 5.8 Management of the EYFS is excellent. Children are safe and happy; the environment is warm and friendly, with excellent resources and displays well chosen to offer stimulation and challenge. Staff work together well, planning a programme of activities which sets ambitious targets, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' progress is considered during regular meetings so that the success of learning plans can be evaluated and amended. All staff are appraised regularly so that their professional training needs can be considered. Some minor omissions in the content of the safeguarding policy were rectified by the end of the inspection.
- 5.9 From Year 1, all teaching staff also co-ordinate and manage at least one curriculum subject. They are responsible for preparing a development plan, planning curriculum content and assessing resources. Documentation is comprehensive in all subjects and includes the integration of ICT within each curriculum subject. Management has therefore effectively met the second recommendation of the previous inspection regarding the use of computers to enhance learning. The outcome of sharing responsibility for the development of the curriculum is that staff work as a cohesive team, feeling a strong sense of empowerment and involvement in the success of the school. Information about pupil performance is shared informally or recorded as appropriate and involves evaluating past performance, setting new targets for improvement and reflecting on progress achieved. The school operates smoothly on a day to day basis because the staff work exceptionally well together. All parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school was well led and managed and the inspection team concurred with this view.
- 5.10 The school has an excellent and constructive relationship with parents, who are overwhelmingly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children and with the quality of communication with the school. In their responses to the questionnaire, they all agreed that their child is happy and safe and that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and academic standards. Parents are pleased with the progress their child makes and would recommend the school to another parent.

- 5.11 Communication with parents is excellent. The frequent and informal dialogue with senior managers at the start and end of the day is a strength of the school. Before the start of term, new parents are invited to a summer picnic to welcome them to the school family in addition to receiving advice and information about school procedures. Once they become members of the school community, they remain well informed about school news and events through emails, the website and the reading record. Should any concerns arise, inspectors found that the school has appropriate policies and systems in place to deal with these in a timely manner. No formal complaints have been registered in the preceding academic year.
- 5.12 Relationships between parents and staff in the EYFS are particularly strong with many opportunities for informal contact as well as formal termly meetings to discuss each child's progress against the Early Learning Goals. Any concerns are raised promptly and parents are involved as partners when additional support is needed. Parents receive regular information about the curriculum with suggestions as how they may help their child at school; for instance, parents of Foundation children were encouraged to take their child to the fishmongers as they were studying 'Under the Sea'.
- 5.13 Throughout the school, parents have appropriate opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children through regular emails sent from school and the weekly blog which enables parents to know what is being covered in the curriculum each week. Parents are encouraged to talk to their child's teacher and to be as involved in school life as much as they wish. Opportunities include helping to take children to the nearby swimming pool, hearing pupils read or accompanying the class on outings. Parents are also invited into school on appropriate occasions to talk about their profession or culture so that pupils are exposed to life in the wider community. The formal parents' association is active in arranging social events and has raised valuable funds for playground equipment and other resources. The outcome is that parents feel very much a part of the school, which they describe in discussion as being like a large and extended family. The inspection team agree that the frequent, relaxed opportunities to discuss any matters of concern with staff at all levels is a significant strength of the school.
- 5.14 A very small number of parents felt that they did not receive sufficient information about their child's progress. The inspection evidence did not support this view. In addition to daily informal opportunities for dialogue, parents receive a full written report annually as well as termly grade sheets detailing progress in literacy, numeracy and science. Consultation evenings are held regularly and all parents are offered an additional meeting each term to review their child's written work. In this way, parents are kept well informed of their child's current attainment and apprised of any areas of difficulty. Parents meet with their child's teacher at the start of the academic year to discuss routines and expectations. Parents of older pupils are offered helpful meetings with senior managers to discuss appropriate choices for senior education.

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