



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

HOMEFIELD PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Homefield Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Homefield Preparatory School
DfE Number	319/6001
Registered Charity Number	312753
Address	Homefield Preparatory School Western Road Sutton Surrey SM1 2TE
Telephone Number	020 8642 0965
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Email Address	administration@homefield.sutton.sch.uk
Acting Head	Mrs Sabine White
Chair of Governors	Mr Anthony Jeans
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	390
Gender of Pupils	Boys
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 61 5-11: 281 11-13: 48
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Barbara Whiteway
EYFS Gender	Boys
Inspection dates	19 Mar 2013 to 22 Mar 2013

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2010.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Clare-Anne Bruce	Team Inspector (Head of Junior School, ISA school)
Mrs Ruth Mann	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mr Alan Laurent	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Balding	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Homefield Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys aged from three to thirteen years. It was founded in 1870 and moved to its present purpose-built site on the outskirts of Sutton in 1968. At that time it became a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an acting head.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been substantially reorganised. The school aims to provide high standards of learning and teaching for all, and to set high expectations within a caring atmosphere. It seeks to provide a thorough preparation for each pupil's next school and a secure foundation for each pupil's future life.
- 1.3 The school is organised into three sections: the Early Years Unit (EYU), junior department (Years 1 to 3) and senior department (Years 4 to 8). At the time of the inspection there were 390 pupils on roll, of whom 61 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Of these, 18 attended the Nursery on a part-time basis and 12 attended full-time. All the pupils in Reception attended full-time.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, the age of entry has been raised to three. The EYU is housed in adjoining accommodation within the main teaching block. This is equipped to cater for the needs of younger children, and has separate washroom facilities and an outdoor learning area.
- 1.5 Pupils come from families of a wide variety of professional and cultural backgrounds and their ethnicity reflects that of the local population. The school assesses children for entry into the EYU through observation of their play in small groups. Older pupils seeking admission undertake a written assessment and interview. The average ability of the pupils is above the national average and few pupils have an ability that is below average. The school has identified 56 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive extra help in school. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Two of the twenty-five pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive support within school.

- 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 tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery First Steps	Nursery (3 to 3½ years)
Nursery Second Steps	Nursery (3½ to 4 years)
Reception	Reception (4 to 5 years)

Junior Department

School	NC name
Class 1	Year 1
Class 2	Year 2
Class 3	Year 3

Senior Department

School	NC name
Lower 4 th	Year 4
Upper 4 th	Year 5
5 th	Year 6
Lower 6 th	Year 7
Upper 6 th	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 From the EYFS, where standards are excellent, and throughout the school, pupils of all ages, including those with SEND or EAL and those who are particularly able or talented, achieve very well in relation to their abilities. Pupils make good and often rapid progress in their learning and consequently their achievement is high. Their academic success results from teaching that is usually good and often excellent, within a well-balanced curricular and extra-curricular programme. Pupils with SEND or EAL are generally well provided for through excellent individual learning support and, when teaching takes into account their differing needs, within the classroom. Those who are particularly able usually make good progress, and when they are set tasks that challenge their thinking rather than additional class work, their progress is rapid. Pupils make a strong contribution to their learning through their highly motivated and enthusiastic attitudes.
- 2.2 The pupils display excellent standards of personal development. Children develop confidence within the EYFS, where they are cared for extremely well, and become self-aware, with strong emotional maturity. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong, and enjoy taking responsibility within the school community and for charity work. Their excellent cultural development is demonstrated in their mutually tolerant and respectful relationships within the diverse cultural traditions represented in the school. Pupils benefit from the staff's commitment to their pastoral care. Some pupils expressed in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire dissatisfaction with elements of their care, however those spoken to during the inspection confirmed that relationships are good, that staff are supportive and that they are happy and proud of their school. Since the previous inspection, the school has ensured that its provision for the welfare, health and safeguarding of its pupils is now robust.
- 2.3 Governance has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. New appointments have brought to the governing body a useful range of expertise. Governors are strongly committed to the school's aims and ethos, and maintain strong oversight of all aspects of its operation. They are keen to develop their insight into the strengths and challenges of the school and maintain effective liaison with and support for the school's leadership and heads of department. They have now established effective arrangements to fulfil all their regulatory responsibilities. The leadership of the EYFS is excellent and of the school overall, good. The school leadership has a strong sense of direction and monitors learning, teaching and pastoral matters well. The role of middle management has developed since the previous inspection, however the monitoring and implementation of improvements in some departments are limited. Links with parents are excellent. A small minority of the small number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed some dissatisfaction with aspects of provision. Those who spoke to inspectors expressed happiness with all aspects of the school. The school has successfully addressed all the recommendations of the previous inspection.

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. Ensure that information from assessment is always used to provide tasks in lessons which are well matched to pupils' differing abilities.
2. Increase the accountability of heads of department for monitoring their subject areas and strengthen their links with senior leaders.
3. Improve the profile and effectiveness of the school council so that pupils are confident that their views are considered.
4. Standardise risk assessments in line with the school's policy and indicate on them how risks have been mitigated.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve good and often excellent standards across the curriculum. High literacy standards begin in the EYFS, where children in Nursery recognise their name and in Reception where the majority are reading at a level well above their chronological age. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and those who start school with EAL quickly develop fluency of understanding and communication. By the end of the EYFS, children write sentences in cursive script, using punctuation. Pupils' writing skills continue to develop well, so that by Year 8 they are adept at writing formal essays as well as imaginative prose and poetry. Numeracy standards are high across the school. In the EYFS, younger children recognise numbers to ten and count the number of cups needed for snacks; older children can add and subtract to ten, recognise numbers to twenty and describe the properties of three-dimensional shapes. Older pupils apply mathematics capably, such as when investigating the relationship between resistance and electrical current in science.
- 3.3 Children in the EYFS use digital technology confidently. They are active learners and were observed using a video camera and microphone in their imaginative play. They operate remote controlled cars and complete problem-solving tasks on the computer or interactive whiteboard. From Year 1, pupils demonstrate their competence in information and communication technology (ICT) in areas such as touch typing, word processing, databases and control projects. At the time of the inspection they did not have many opportunities to apply these skills, other than through their homework. Children in the EYFS gradually become independent as they enjoy making choices in their activities. When given the opportunity, older pupils demonstrate clear and logical reasoning, although occasionally teaching is overly directed and so these skills are less evident. From the EYFS, pupils have many opportunities to engage in creative activities, and their ability and imagination are demonstrated across the school in the attractive artwork on display, including a model that was runner up in a competition in London. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate high standards of musicality in the many opportunities provided for instrumental and choral work. In the EYFS, children develop good motor skills as a result of specialist physical education (PE) lessons and frequent opportunities for physical activity. Pupils continue this progress and many perform well in other physical areas of the curriculum.
- 3.4 Pupils enjoy and achieve well in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Their committed preparation for concerts and drama productions results in high standards. Pupils have taken part successfully in mathematics, French, art, photography and chess competitions at both national and regional level. Their results in instrumental music examinations have continued to improve since the previous inspection and they are regular finalists in a national music competition. The school's sports teams have reached the finals in regional and national competition and several pupils play at county level in squash and cricket.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative data is available. In this period, where the school has entered pupils in national tests at the ages of seven and eleven, results have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools. Children's attainment at the end of the EYFS is high. This level of

attainment, and the results of nationally standardised measures of progress, together with their work in class and curriculum interviews, indicates that pupils make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The school's own analysis of assessments for 2011 to 2012 indicates that most pupils with SEND or EAL are on or above their target levels. Pupils who are gifted or talented make similarly good progress in relation to their abilities. The majority of pupils transfer at the age of thirteen to independent selective day senior schools in the locality; in the past three years a substantial number have gained academic, music, art and sports awards.

- 3.6 Pupils achieve success in their academic work and the wider curriculum through their strong motivation to do well. They are enthusiastic and work equally effectively independently or collaboratively, although occasionally they do not listen sufficiently carefully to each other or their teachers.

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 has considerable breadth and successfully fulfils the school's aims. The learning programme in the EYFS meets the needs of all children extremely well and offers a good balance of activities, both inside and outside, which reflect the children's interests and allow them to develop their creativity, independent thinking and problem solving. In Years 1 to 8, the curriculum is well balanced and meets the needs of all the pupils, including scholarship preparation for the most able.
- 3.9 Children in the EYFS benefit from the expertise of specialist teaching in music and French. In the junior department the National Curriculum is followed, with the addition of specialist teaching in French, music, ICT and PE. Year 3 is regarded as a transition year; Latin is introduced and pupils are taught by specialist teachers for all subjects. The school has improved the balance of time devoted to non-core subjects in the junior department, in response to the findings of the previous inspection. Specialist teaching for all subjects continues in the senior department, and in Years 7 and 8 the curriculum is focused on the requirements of Common Entrance and scholarship examinations. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided throughout the school in discrete lessons and Greek is taught in a club to Common Entrance level. Teaching occasionally makes use of cross-curricular links between subjects.
- 3.10 The previous inspection found that ICT provision was limited. While improvement has been slow, the school has recently installed an infrastructure to support the use of ICT throughout and enable remote access for pupils and their parents. At the time of the inspection new laptops had arrived but were not yet commissioned, and so provision for pupils was mainly restricted to the ICT suite, limiting its use in other subjects.
- 3.11 Arrangements for pupils with SEND or EAL are excellent. Pupils needing support are identified efficiently and given help either in class or through withdrawal. The learning support department has frequent liaison with parents and with other professionals. Children with EAL in the EYFS acquire English naturally in the language-rich environment, and so few require additional support after Year 1. Arrangements to meet the needs of pupils who are particularly able or talented ensure that they are identified through assessment and their performance. For instance, when children in the EYFS exceed the Early Learning Goals in literacy,

suitable extension material is made available from Year 1 classes. In discussion, gifted and talented pupils said that every effort is made by teachers to challenge, extend and support them.

- 3.12 Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent and praised by pupils and their parents. A wide range of clubs takes place during lunch breaks and after school. These include sports, music, art, debating and chess activities. Day and residential trips, ranging from farm visits in the Nursery to trips for other pupils to France and Pompeii, enrich the curriculum. Visiting speakers such as an Olympic athlete, authors, and representatives from charities the school is supporting and from public services enhance the pupils' educational experience and personal development. The school hosts a number of events for local independent and maintained schools, such as rugby tournaments. All pupils are given the opportunity to represent the school in team games and to contribute to musical and dramatic performances.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.14 The school has continued to raise the quality of its teaching since the previous inspection and a significant proportion is now excellent. Many lessons therefore successfully promote the school's aim to ensure that all teaching is of high standard. Much teaching has clear learning objectives that are explained at the beginning of the lesson. Pupils benefit from the enthusiasm and secure subject knowledge of their teachers. This results in lively teaching that arouses their interest and promotes high levels of engagement and application. Rapid progress is secured through careful time management that usually moves learning forward at a brisk pace, enabling much ground to be covered. Learning is further enhanced by the effective use of resources such as video clips and interactive whiteboards. In several successful lessons observed, teachers made effective use of open questions to check pupils' understanding and encouraged them to think for themselves; they responded enthusiastically and developed their reasoning skills.
- 3.15 In many lessons, teachers adopt a range of strategies that include opportunities for pupils to discuss in pairs as well as to work independently and undertake practical tasks. Teachers give pupils some opportunities to extend their learning, such as in history and geography projects, although they do not have ready access to digital technology to further support research and independent learning. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and expect behaviour that is conducive to good learning. Occasionally, when class management is less effective, pupils call out and do not listen to others' answers. The school has a clear marking policy that is monitored by senior leaders and some heads of department, although work seen by inspectors did not always reflect its requirements and marking was inconsistent in quality. The best marking not only included praise but highlighted areas for improvement. Other marking was cursory and occasionally work was unmarked.
- 3.16 Pupils with SEND are well supported with specialist help out of class. Teachers are assisted in making effective provision for them within lessons through useful advice on appropriate strategies from the learning support department. In the EYFS, staff planning ensures that the needs of each child, including any with a statement of special educational needs, are met exceptionally well and they are helped to learn effectively. A wide range of imaginative activities encourages children to increase their vocabulary, and the plentiful supply of excellent resources, together with the

balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, enables the high expectations of the staff to be realised by the children. Children develop their ability to make choices and take risks in the safe environment of the outdoor play areas. They learn to interact socially with others and become more independent.

- 3.17 The school is making increasing use of the wide range of assessment data it collects from the EYFS upwards, to monitor and analyse pupils' progress. Use of this information to set learning targets is at an early stage of development. In the most successful lessons, teachers use information from assessment to plan activities that are well matched to the pupils' differing abilities. Consequently, pupils with SEND make good progress and achieve independently, whilst the more able are offered greater challenge and the opportunity to think more deeply. This rigorous planning is not yet consistent across the school. On occasion, when teaching is too rigidly confined to examination preparation, or the same task is set for all pupils rather than varied to suit their abilities, those with SEND rely on adult support to make progress. The most able still make good progress but their capabilities, such as in independent research and deeper thinking, are not fully explored.

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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Across all age ranges, pupils demonstrate that they are confident and have high self-esteem. Pupils show strong self-awareness and are appreciative of support from staff. Self-confidence and belief are promoted well, such as in regular achievement assemblies in the junior department, where pupils are commended for a wide range of successes. Emotional maturity in older pupils was demonstrated both in publicity posters for *Othello*, which showed Year 6 pupils' understanding of the emotional turmoil within the play, and in the music composed for the play by Year 8, which effectively captured its sombreness and drama.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrated strong moral awareness in interviews, when they discussed the school's code of conduct and its rewards and sanctions system. They display a clear sense of right and wrong and a desire for fair play. Pupils are open to others' views and express their own opinions confidently, such as when they reflected on the works of religious philosophers in religious studies (RS), and debated moral questions such as 'Is it ever right to break the law?'
- 4.4 Pupils' social awareness is very well developed. In the EYFS, children worked as a team to construct a tall tower of blocks. They share and take turns when playing outside and discuss friendship in 'circle time'. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to take on areas of responsibility appropriate to their age, in formal roles or informally, such as when assisting younger boys in the lunch queue. Some pupils contribute to the school community through the school council. Each September, pupils of all ages work together for the good of their house in a team-building challenge day. Pupils develop an appreciation of public service when performing at a local home for the elderly and raising money for a variety of charities, for which they display great pride. Their economic and political awareness is promoted through participation in a local annual Citizenship Day. Younger pupils develop good awareness of public institutions through visits from local nurses, police and fire officers in PSHE.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent cultural understanding in their mutually tolerant and respectful relationships within the ethnically diverse school population. They develop their awareness of other cultures and faiths in RS, when researching pilgrimage sites for major world religions, in talks from parents about cultural events, and through visits to religious buildings such as Canterbury Cathedral and a local synagogue. Their awareness of another European culture is enhanced through visiting their French pen friends and day trips to France.
- 4.6 In the EYFS, children are well prepared for transition to their next class through 'golden time', when all age groups join together in creative activities. Older pupils show themselves to be confident young individuals, who look forward to the next stage of their education, acknowledging a need to be ready for this and to contribute to society as a whole. By the time they reach Year 8, pupils display excellent personal development and maturity.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.8 The committed care provided by staff contributes well to the pupils' strong personal development, and arrangements enable effective pastoral support and guidance. In the EYFS, the effective use of key people promotes each child's well-being and progress. Parents say that this arrangement enables any concerns to be swiftly addressed. The learning support staff strongly support the social and emotional needs of pupils with SEND or EAL. The school has a suitable plan to make sure that all pupils can access its educational provision and accommodation.
- 4.9 There was a strong disparity between the responses of pupils who completed pre-inspection questionnaires and those spoken to during the inspection. In questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils indicated that teachers do not show concern for them, and that they have no-one to approach with a personal difficulty. Inspectors could find no evidence to support these views. In interviews pupils of all ages said that relationships with staff and each other are good, and that they could approach a member of staff for help, should the need arise. Some older pupils said that there is sometimes a lack of respect from some pupils towards teachers. In lessons, inspectors observed informal yet respectful relations between staff and pupils. Academic and pastoral information is efficiently communicated through conversation, email and message boards in the staff room.
- 4.10 In response to the questionnaire, a majority of pupils felt that sanctions are not awarded fairly. Inspectors found that arrangements to secure good behaviour are suitable and effective. During interviews, pupils said that whilst some staff are firm, they are fair, and they counter-balance sanctions with rewards for good behaviour and hard work. Scrutiny of behavioural records indicates that more serious sanctions are rarely employed, but that the school takes great care to monitor incidents and initiate appropriate support for any pupils whose conduct is causing concern. Pupils' behaviour during the inspection was good, but sometimes boisterous. In questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils and parents expressed concerns about bullying. Inspectors found that the school has, and implements, a thorough anti-bullying policy. Both pupils and parents spoken to said that bullying is rare and usually quickly addressed. Many pupils mentioned positively the new 'Beat the Bully' box, which allows pupils to raise concerns anonymously.
- 4.11 Each form is represented on the school council. The school has responded to several matters raised by pupils, such as by providing mirrors in the washrooms. In response to the questionnaire, a minority of pupils indicated that their opinions are insufficiently considered. In interviews, some pupils said that opportunities to serve on the school council, and therefore express their views, are limited. Inspectors agree that the school council does not yet have a strong profile within the school.
- 4.12 Pupils are offered a wide and healthy range of home-cooked food at lunchtime, which most say they enjoy. From the EYFS, they have a strong awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and appreciate the good opportunities for exercise which are provided through games lessons and break times.

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 Since the previous inspection the school has made safeguarding a priority. It ensures that its arrangements comply with statutory requirements and are appropriately implemented. All staff, including those in the EYFS, have recently undergone safeguarding training and the designated staff are trained at the required higher level. The school now ensures that checks on staff on appointment are carried out and recorded correctly.
- 4.15 Measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are now robust. They are monitored by the health and safety committee, which reports termly to governors. The school has addressed all the recommendations from the recent fire risk assessment, which was carried out by an external assessor. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and evacuation drills are carried out at appropriate intervals. School equipment is regularly maintained and records are thorough. The school has a risk assessment policy, and risk assessments are in place for facilities, pupils' activities and school trips. However, these are inconsistent in quality and some do not clearly indicate when measures have been taken to mitigate the risk.
- 4.16 The school has improved its provision for pupils who are ill or injured. Since the previous inspection, greater numbers of staff have completed two-day first-aid training and all teaching staff in the EYFS have qualified as paediatric first aiders. A member of staff with additional training has recently been appointed to take overall responsibility for medical matters. Medicines are kept in a securely locked cabinet and are administered using appropriate procedures, recorded accordingly. The school's admission and attendance registers are well maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance has improved since the previous inspection. The governing body has been strengthened by the recruitment of additional governors with particular areas of experience, such as education, finance, the law and compliance, so that the board now offers a useful range of expertise. New governors undergo a suitable induction process and over half the governors have attended relevant training. Governors exercise secure oversight through termly reports from the leadership as well as from their sub-committees, where issues are examined in detail. Through the finance and personnel committee they work closely with the bursar and senior leaders to secure well-maintained facilities, suitable resources and sufficient well-qualified staff. Governors consider future challenges and the strategic direction of the school in greater depth at planning days. They adopt the school development plan after discussion with the leadership.
- 5.3 Governors regularly review school policies and, through the education and pastoral sub-committee, monitor their implementation. Staff make regular presentations, and each governor has an on-going link with a head of subject department to enable the monitoring of educational standards. Governors are committed in their support of the school; some are parents of current or former pupils. They attend events such as open mornings and concerts, and some provide practical support in school. Governance of the EYFS is very supportive and effective due to regular visits from the governor with nominated responsibility, who has experience with teaching this age group.
- 5.4 Since the previous inspection found shortcomings in the monitoring of statutory requirements for safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety, governors have given a high priority to fulfilling these responsibilities. A governor visits the school each term to monitor recruitment checks and another oversees the arrangements for safeguarding. These, together with health and safety matters, are reported to governors through termly meetings. Governors have all received training in child protection and now conduct a formal annual review of safeguarding arrangements.

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 overall.
- 5.6 The leadership has ensured that all recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. The excellent personal development of the pupils and the high level of their achievements are the result of the ethos that has been created in accordance with the school's aims, and the excellent example set by the hard-working senior management team (SMT). Leadership and management of the EYFS are excellent and strongly contribute to the excellent outcomes for children. The school is led by the strategy team, comprising the head, bursar, deputy for pastoral and academic director. The heads of the junior department and EYU join them to make up the SMT. At the time of the inspection a member of senior leadership had undertaken the role of acting head. The middle tier of management consists mainly of heads of subject from the senior department but the links between them and the SMT are limited in most subject areas. Recent changes and new appointments in the middle tier have not yet had time to make a significant impact and the link between senior and middle management structures is not strong in all subject departments. As a result, the implementation of whole-school academic policies is inconsistent.
- 5.7 The SMT provides clear educational direction. Priorities are identified and discussed by the leadership, and increasingly, by the staff as a whole. The school development plan provides a sharp focus for future and continuous development, is supported by the governing body and is kept under constant review. Staff appreciate a recent development of encouragement by senior leaders to put forward new initiatives. In the EYFS, staff have built further upon the strengths noted at the previous inspection, through effective self-evaluation, employing additional qualified staff and establishing a new recording and tracking system. All policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity. The team evaluates the setting's effectiveness each week and notes the progress of individual children to plan their next steps in learning, discussing any issues and concerns about them, and finding appropriate solutions. Staff use resources to support children's learning effectively. Staff attend frequent training as part of their professional development and the setting has strong links with local agencies, which provide additional support when needed.
- 5.8 The school has identified a need for heads of subject to increase their skills and understanding of their accountability for pupils' progress, and to undertake regular monitoring of their departments. This is providing a more coherent approach across the different sections of the school, and regular departmental meetings now take place in most subject areas and all subjects have development plans. However, departmental management is not fully effective across all subjects; responsibilities are not discharged consistently at this level. Consequently, outcomes from monitoring in some areas, such as marking, are insufficiently implemented.
- 5.9 Management is successful in supporting the professional development of staff. The appraisal scheme includes observation of their work. Targets linked to training opportunities support both staff and the school's development. All teaching and non-teaching staff are encouraged to attend courses both within and outside school. All, including those in the EYFS, are trained in safeguarding at an appropriate level and safer recruitment procedures are followed when new staff are appointed.

Throughout the school, there is a clear awareness of welfare, health and safety, supported by regular training opportunities in key areas such as first aid, food hygiene and fire safety. The strong link between senior leaders and governors ensures that regulatory matters are monitored and communicated efficiently. The daily routine administration and care of the school are very efficient and well managed. The contribution made by ancillary staff in catering, grounds, maintenance and administration is much appreciated by the whole school community.

- 5.10 Links with parents, carers and guardians have strengthened since the previous inspection and are now excellent. The very strong links that exist in the EYFS enable the good stable relationships with parents to be maintained as pupils progress through the school. A small number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They were particularly pleased with the way that their children are well cared for, that their children feel safe and happy in school and that there is a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular areas of experience offered to all. A small minority of parents indicated that they are given insufficient information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence does not support this view. The school provides full annual reports, parents' evenings twice a year and half-termly progress information for pupils from Year 4 upwards, and it operates an 'open door' policy. A few parents felt that timely responses to questions are not forthcoming. However, parents present at discussions said that staff are eager to help, that they have direct contact through email and that responses are speedy. In questionnaire responses, a few parents said that the school does not achieve high standards of behaviour. In discussion, parents related how well pupils behaved on a recent trip and said that their good behaviour is often commented on by outsiders. A small minority of parents were unhappy with the school's handling of concerns. Inspectors' scrutiny of complaints' records indicates that the few formal complaints received were handled in accordance with the school's complaints policy. Inspectors investigated thoroughly all the concerns of the few parents who raised these in questionnaire responses, but could not find any evidence to support these. All parents met during the inspection were highly supportive of the school.
- 5.11 Communication with parents is very strong. A comprehensive website and the school prospectus provide all parents of current and prospective pupils with detailed information about the school and this is supplemented by the excellent weekly magazine *Headlines*. In the EYU, parents have daily contact with the staff in the morning and at collection times, and the reading diary provides opportunity for two-way written communication. The parents' handbook, together with curriculum handbooks, provides details of what is expected of parents and the role they may play in the development of their children. The instant electronic contact that advises parents of any immediate situations is particularly valued by parents. Parents are always welcome at the school, and they are invited to a wide variety of school events, such as matches, plays and concerts, attend coffee mornings or help with trips.
- 5.12 The very active and successful Parents' Association organises a variety of fund-raising and social events. The success of these has enabled numerous valuable investments for the school, including the refurbishment of the outdoor area for the EYFS.

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