



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

PILGRIMS PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School
DfE Number	822/6010
EYFS Number	EY453343
Registered Charity Number	1066861
Address	Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School Brickhill Drive Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 7QZ
Telephone Number	01234 369555
Fax Number	01234 369556
Email Address	Enquiries@pilgrims-school.org.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Jo Webster
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sue Clark
Age Range	0 to 7
Total Number of Pupils	364
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (198 boys; 166 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 122 3-5 (EYFS): 111 5-7: 131
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Kim Goodwin
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	16 Jun 2015 to 19 Jun 2015

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 June 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) 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 chair of 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 Linda Donowho	Reporting Inspector
Miss Katy Morgan	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Sue Saunders	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Miss Mary Regan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School is an independent school for boys and girls aged from three months to seven years. It is set in its own spacious grounds within Bedford and benefits from a substantial wooded area. The school opened in January 2000, with Little Pilgrims, for children aged 3 months to 3 years, moving into a purpose-built unit in 2008.
- 1.2 The school is owned and managed by the Harpur Trust, which is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The Harpur Trust retains overall responsibility for the school; however, the day-to-day management is overseen by a board of governors known as the School Committee. The School Committee is made up of co-opted members and trustees from the Harpur Trust Board. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed.
- 1.3 Whilst engaging pupils with the wider community and the world around them, the school aims to inspire each child to love learning. It seeks to provide a safe and happy environment, full of rich and challenging opportunities, which motivates all children to discover their full potential whilst recognising and supporting their individual needs. The school sets out to stimulate children's curiosity, imagination and creativity, encouraging them to be confident and independent thinkers.
- 1.4 The school is organised into two sections: Little Pilgrims, and the main school, for pupils aged from three to seven years. At the time of the inspection there were 364 pupils on roll, of whom 198 were boys and 166 girls. Of these, 233 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): 122 were under 3 years old, and 64 were aged 3 to 4, the majority of whom attend part-time. The 47 children in Reception attended full-time, along with a further 131 in Years 1 and 2. Sixty pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom six have education, health and care plans and receive funding from the local authority for one-to-one support, and 33 have additional one-to-one support outside the classroom. Twenty-one pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), however none require additional support for English. Pupils are drawn from professional families living in Bedford and the surrounding area. The majority of pupils are of white British ethnicity and a small proportion is drawn from a range of other nationalities and cultures.
- 1.5 At the end of Year 2 the vast majority of the children move on to one of the academically selective preparatory or junior schools managed by the Harpur Trust.
- 1.6 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Most pupils are of at least above average, with a notable proportion in some year groups being of well above average ability.

- 1.7 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from the oldest Nursery group upwards and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the younger Nursery groups and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Babies	Nursery (3 to 9 months)
Little Toddlers	Nursery (9 to 18 months)
Toddlers	Nursery (18-months to 2 years)
Kindergarten	Nursery (2 to 3 years)

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements, including those in the EYFS, is excellent. Standards are extremely high and progress is excellent for all pupils throughout the school. The theme-based curriculum, with a significant focus on outdoor learning, engages the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The many exciting and innovative activities ensure pupils' constant enthusiasm for learning and the development of their knowledge and skills. This strongly reflects the school's aim to inspire each child to love learning. In addition, the excellent programme of extra-curricular activities caters for the pupils' different abilities and ages. Pupils' achievements are particularly strong in literacy and mathematics. Their success is the result of excellent teaching, and their exemplary attitudes to learning. The provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is fully integrated into the curriculum, with excellent support in lessons being a strong feature, and where necessary, this is provided individually. More able pupils are regularly offered challenging activities both in lessons and extra-curricular provision to ensure their progress.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is of a high standard as a result of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the equally strong pastoral care they receive. They show considerable confidence and self-esteem, which are sensitively promoted, and a well-developed moral sense that enables them to be aware of how their actions affect others. This strongly reflects the school's value of respect for each other. Their social development is exceptional due to the emphasis placed on collaborative working, fund raising for charity and involvement in the community. The pupils' relationships with staff and each other are excellent and result in the high levels of satisfaction noted in pre-inspection questionnaire responses and interviews, as well as in their exemplary behaviour. Staff regularly discuss pastoral matters concerning pupils, however at present there is no formal process with regard to communication between those delivering before- and after-school care and those in the school. The school ensures that on a day-to-day basis the welfare, health and safeguarding of its pupils are assured through thorough risk assessments and safety procedures; it responds promptly and efficiently to any concerns brought to its attention.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. The aims of the school are fulfilled and fostered by the governors, who are highly committed to the academic progress and personal development of the pupils. They have an excellent oversight of the school, informed by reports from the leadership, visits to the school, and regular meetings with staff and parents. Strong leadership and management at all levels enable daily school life to proceed calmly and efficiently. The leadership team provides a clear vision for the school. With the support of the full staff team, it has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and has carefully identified areas that need improvement. The role of subject co-ordinators works well, enabling them to exercise a clear oversight of their subjects, and an effective appraisal system is in place. In response to the previous inspection, regular teachers' observations of each other's lessons are now firmly in place to identify and share good practice. Links with parents are excellent. They are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision.

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.
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
 - 1. Develop a system of formal communication between the school staff and staff within the before- and after-school care in order to ensure that all messages and concerns are shared appropriately.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school fulfils its aim to inspire each child to love learning. Pupils show great pride in their school and express themselves willingly, excited to talk about life at school and to share their thoughts and ideas with adults and their peers. From an early age, pupils learn to listen intently to explanations, questions, stories and instructions. They are articulate and provide descriptions that show an increasingly wide and varied vocabulary. Achievements in literacy and numeracy are particularly high because of the importance given to these areas within the curriculum. Standards of reading are excellent due to the strong focus on the sounds that letters make and because a love of reading is nurtured from an early age. This is further developed through the constant use of the outstanding open-plan library, which is the hub of the school. Pupils' writing skills develop early and they take pride in the presentation of their work, developing a neat cursive script. They write proficiently, enthusiastically and creatively for a wide range of purposes and develop an excellent grasp of spelling and punctuation.
- 3.3 Pupils also develop strong numeracy skills and confidently master mathematical concepts of increasing difficulty as they move through the school. The development of basic information and communication technology skills is built up securely and pupils are confident in using a range of applications and programmes appropriate to their age. In other areas of the curriculum, pupils' knowledge and understanding are well developed and exceptional links are made between subjects in themed work across the school. Pupils often achieve particularly well in activities such as art and singing, and outdoor education especially, including adventure and skills-based learning that enriches their aesthetic and creative development in interesting and enjoyable ways. This is seen in the high standard and variety of displays around the site, including the work created to celebrate the school's 15th birthday, which involved whole-school initiatives. Musical abilities are well developed, including the early introduction of elementary notation.
- 3.4 Pupils develop their skills and interests through a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. The excellent sporting facilities ensure the development of high quality physical skills. Individual achievements are strongly encouraged through music, dance, and sports such as swimming and tennis. Pupils often gain high standards in these areas for their age and ability. For example, success has been enjoyed by the orchestra, percussion ensemble and choir at a local festival, and by the school's teams in tennis tournaments and swimming galas. Through these activities, pupils' confidence is significantly developed.
- 3.5 The attainment of pupils cannot be measured in relation to performance in national tests, but based on the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books, and interviews with pupils, together with the school's tracking data, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. This includes pupils with SEND or EAL, who are given extremely good help by their class teachers or learning support staff. Great care is taken to monitor this progress over time. More able pupils make rapid progress because individual teachers plan work appropriate to their needs and because many enrichment activities are provided for them.

3.6 The pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning greatly support their achievements. From an early age, they enthuse about their work, and understand their strengths and what they need to work on, due to the careful targets that are set for them. They settle to work well, generally show excellent concentration and remain focused when working collaboratively, which they do regularly. Their progress is well supported by the encouraging relationships they enjoy with their teachers and each other.

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 wide-ranging curriculum covers the required areas of learning. It is extremely well supported by the extra-curricular programme, which offers an excellent range and breadth of experiences to pupils. The curriculum has at its core the school's aim of creating a stimulating environment, engaging the interest of all pupils and enabling them to make excellent progress. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics across the school, and pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music, French, art and sport. The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of elements of fundamental British values, enhancing their mutual respect and their understanding of the need for a clear code of conduct, facilitating reasoned choices to be made.

3.9 Detailed cross-curricular planning of themes is highly successful in building upon the pupils' interests and creates a variety of rich opportunities for them to develop and apply their knowledge and skills, as well as stimulating their curiosity and a positive attitude to learning. The outdoor learning opportunities in the curriculum are exceptional and reflect the school's holistic approach to learning. The outdoor experience programme gives pupils opportunities to develop confidence and independence, and the freedom to explore and create long-lasting childhood memories.

3.10 The curriculum is enriched by an excellent programme of educational trips and visits, as well as visitors to the school, all of which consolidate pupils' knowledge and provide a stimulus to their learning. Pupils in Year 1, for example, as part of their 'Out and About' topic, enjoyed a two-day forest adventure, making clay faces on trees and building dens.

3.11 In keeping with the school's aim of recognising each child as an individual, the curriculum is structured to cater for the abilities and needs of all its pupils. Able and gifted pupils are provided with appropriate challenge in classroom activities. In addition, an excellent range of enrichment opportunities furthers their interests and skills, for example a swimming squad, an enrichment reading programme, art activities and an orchestra club.

3.12 Pupils with SEND or EAL are extremely well supported through a well-planned system of identification and provision. Specialist staff make excellent use of their subject knowledge and liaise closely with class teachers to provide clear and appropriate targets that ensure all pupils achieve to their potential.

3.13 The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. It caters for a variety of interests and contributes effectively to the pupils' academic and personal development, giving all pupils access to sporting, creative and academic pursuits. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by strong links with the local community, raising their awareness of others. Linked to the school's ecological provision, pupils help with litter clearing in the local park. The choir performs annually to residents of the Harpur

Trust Almshouses at an afternoon tea hosted by another Harpur Trust school. The pupils work well with staff to support a variety of local charitable enterprises, such as a charity for young adults in Bedford with learning difficulties.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Highly effective teaching promotes excellent progress and reflects the school's aim of creating a stimulating environment, where each pupil is inspired to adopt a love of learning and is recognised as an individual.
- 3.16 Teachers know the pupils in their care extremely well, in respect of both their emotional and their intellectual needs. Lessons are well paced, energetic and meticulously planned to harness the pupils' interests and enthusiasm, promoting independence and rapid progress, and preparing them for the next steps in their learning.
- 3.17 Pupils speak highly of their teachers. The mutual respect between pupils and teachers is a strong element within the school, encouraging reflection and questioning, and providing the opportunity for all pupils to embrace challenge within a caring learning environment. Pupils are given the time to explore their ideas and share opinions, and collaborative work is a strength of the school. During a Year 2 art and outdoor school lesson, discussions between pupils created the opportunity for them to take ownership of their learning, which resulted in high levels of engagement and achievement. All contributions are valued, and clear boundaries set for behaviour are well managed and respected.
- 3.18 Lessons are carefully tailored to the age, ability and needs of the pupils, and staff have an excellent knowledge of how to promote the best educational experiences for them. Cross-curricular teaching is strong and further promotes consistently high levels of pupil engagement. For example, a Year 1 music lesson skilfully built upon topic work in class, with pupils notating rhythms and chanting a lively rap with great enthusiasm around the story of the *Three Little Pigs*.
- 3.19 Extremely skilled teaching assistants provide strong support for the pupils. Regular assessments are used constructively across subjects to monitor progress and to guide the planning of lessons and address individual needs. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and constructive, well embedded and understood by the pupils, giving them a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development.
- 3.20 Teachers make use of the school's excellent facilities and resources to provide stimulating activities and they are adept at using the outdoor environment to enrich their teaching. They convey their strong subject knowledge to the pupils with commitment and enthusiasm, catching their interest and desire to succeed.
- 3.21 The development of the pupils' confidence and independence are central to the teaching provision across the school and expectations are high for all groups, including the most able. Teachers extend pupils' interests and skills effectively in class and challenge is a natural component of lessons, promoted by encouragement, praise and instant feedback. In addition, a range of enrichment activities is available, for example in music, art, reading and sport.
- 3.22 Pupils with SEND or EAL are supported extremely well. The school has an excellent relationship and liaison with the local authority with regard to pupils whose support is

funded. The team of specialist learning support teachers prepares thorough individual education plans, which provide high quality support. Detailed learning goals are communicated to staff and shared with parents to ensure consistency of support. As a result, the specified needs of the pupils are met.

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 active promotion of personal development throughout the school successfully fulfils its aims, vision and values to recognise each child as an individual and to allow pupils to become valued members of the school community who show self-discipline and respect for each other.
- 4.3 Pupils develop an excellent spiritual awareness. A culture which encourages the appreciation of non-material aspects of life permeates the school, and there is a genuine appreciation of the scenic surroundings. Music is regularly used to inspire pupils, as seen when calming tunes were played in the classrooms and during assembly when pupils listened to the 'composer of the month'. Pupils are confident and reflective, and have well-developed self-esteem because caring staff give their time and support them. Through pupils' participation in the school's excellent programme of outdoor learning, this sense of self-confidence, self-esteem and teamwork is nurtured as the pupils explore a stimulating, multi-sensory environment.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral understanding is excellent. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, as demonstrated through the 'eco' council. Ecological matters feature strongly and pupils show genuine concern for their environment and others around them. The school has achieved Eco Schools Green Flag status, and a group of pupils recycled objects to make a variety of toys for the 'eco' council and other schools to play with. Behaviour within the classrooms is calm and of a high standard. Manners, respect and kindness come naturally to the pupils and are evident throughout the school. Pupils understand the need for rules and, in the wider world, for laws. Themes in whole-school and class assemblies help to reinforce the school values and develop an understanding of friendship, co-operation and curiosity.
- 4.5 The social awareness of pupils is extremely well developed, encouraged by the strong sense of community. From an early age the pupils develop excellent co-operative teamwork skills in choirs and orchestras, and in classroom activities. All pupils respond well to informal responsibilities as they help around the school. Pupils say that they have suitable opportunities to express opinions within their school community and that staff listen to their ideas. Their inter-personal skills are exemplary and they show great consideration to each other. Pupils are enthusiastic when raising money for charities chosen by the school community as a whole and by individual peers who share their ideas often through assemblies. The pupils show a growing understanding of public institutions and services in England.
- 4.6 The quality of pupils' cultural development is excellent. They are sensitive and respectful of cultural differences. Pupils have a good understanding of British values and traditions as well as those of other cultures. Their involvement in concerts, learning about well-known artists and taking part in and watching drama productions add depth to their cultural experiences. Pupils display a strong appreciation of their own traditions and during their time in the school they learn about other religions through festivals, assemblies and taking part in a "faith walk" in Year 2.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 All staff share responsibility for pastoral care, which they exercise conscientiously and sympathetically. Their sensitive approach ensures that pupils are extremely well cared for, supported and guided. This fully reflects the school's aims. Members of staff work together to provide excellent role models. Staff know the pupils extremely well and time is taken to resolve any issues of concern regarding pupils which may arise. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils feel valued and respected. Pupils report that they feel safe and receive a lot of help from staff, and the high quality care is recognised by parents. Channels of communication with regard to pupil care are informal between the school and the staff providing before- and after-school care, which many pupils regularly attend. They rely mainly on oral messages being relayed correctly. There is no formal recording system in place to ensure that messages and information are always relayed to the appropriate person.
- 4.9 The school has excellent policies and systems to promote good behaviour. Various reward systems celebrate both academic and personal achievement, and boost pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a difficulty, and comment that they are very happy at school and have fun. Through an effective behaviour policy, staff and pupils guard against unkindness and disagreements. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in a consistent and constructive manner and pupils thrive in this atmosphere of confidence and trust. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.10 The school provides freshly prepared food and encourages pupils to have a balanced, healthy diet. Pupils have many opportunities to take regular exercise through using the school woodlands and outside areas.
- 4.11 Pupils exercise responsibility through a range of activities suitable to their age. These include helping to supervise younger children at lunchtime and roles as school council and 'eco' council members. There are excellent formal and informal arrangements for pupils to express their views, including the school council and the highly effective everyday dialogue between staff and pupils.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.13 Throughout the school, the well-being of pupils is central and procedures for ensuring this contribute to their welfare and happiness.
- 4.14 Staff receive appropriate training in child protection, both when they first arrive and at appropriate intervals; those who act as designated persons attend additional training courses with the local social services department as required. As a result, staff are aware of the action to take if issues arise and the school liaises appropriately with local agencies. Safeguarding is overseen by the governing body, which conducts an annual review, while governors with specific responsibility for safeguarding meet regularly with the designated persons to discuss any safeguarding matters that arise. The child protection policy has been updated to reflect the most recent regulatory requirements, reinforcing the school's commitment to keeping its pupils safe. The staffing recruitment process is rigorous, and checks prior to appointment are completed and recorded as required.

- 4.15 Health and safety procedures are particularly well organised and general and specific risk assessments cover all aspects of school life. Effective measures are in place to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, procedures are practised regularly and efficient records kept. Any health and safety concerns, including possible fire risks, are recorded centrally and acted upon promptly and efficiently. Termly whole-school health and safety committee meetings involve discussion of all issues, and necessary action is taken to ensure the safety of pupils and compliance with regulations.
- 4.16 Registration of pupils is methodical, with absence followed up quickly, and the school appropriately maintains attendance registers and an appropriate admission register.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 A number of members of the governing body sit on the board of the Harpur Trust as trustees. They, together with a group of co-opted members, provide an excellent vision for the core values and future of the school. They ensure that it maintains its ethos, whilst continuing to develop high quality education through innovation, significant investment in staff, accommodation and resources, and careful evaluation of performance.
- 5.3 The roles and responsibilities of the governing body are clearly established and governors bring a wide range of interests and expertise to their role. The board has a clearly defined structure. Highly effective and supportive committees meet termly, as does the full board. The chair of governors keeps in constant contact with both the leadership team and the chair of trustees. Governors are frequent visitors to the school, generously giving of their time to observe lessons, talk to staff and attend school functions. The regular and detailed reports from the leadership and presentations from staff give the board an excellent insight into the working of the school, its achievements and its challenges.
- 5.4 Governors fulfil their obligations for monitoring health and safety and for child protection; specific governors have been allocated oversight of these areas, ensuring that relevant policies are regularly reviewed. All governors take part in the annual review of the school's safeguarding arrangements, and their implementation, as required. The governor with oversight of safeguarding meets regularly with the school's designated safeguarding lead in order to discuss and monitor safeguarding matters. Governors undertake training in safeguarding, and new governors receive a full induction. The governors recognise their responsibility for the school's compliance with regulatory requirements.

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 The leadership fervently supports the school's aims and values so that pupils work productively in an enjoyable and challenging learning environment. The leadership team members work exceptionally well together. Structures and routines are clear, comprehensive and well communicated. The leadership team is committed to improving quality and constantly introduces exciting initiatives to support pupils' learning whilst keeping the school's aims firmly in focus. The strengths in its work are reflected in pupils' excellent academic standards and outstanding personal development, and in extremely effective teaching. Their enthusiasm adds much to the happy and caring ethos that governs all school life.
- 5.7 The vision for the school has been meticulously formalised in the school's development plan. From this plan, the aims of the school have developed alongside its values and a principle to inspire each child to love learning. All curricular subjects are represented and staff have made valuable contributions, with curriculum co-

ordinators preparing action plans for their subjects. Consequently, the development plan has a clear focus and well-defined timescales.

- 5.8 A well-organised meeting structure and informal liaison allow staff to evaluate and discuss their practice as well as to monitor the progress and welfare of pupils. Monitoring processes are firmly established, and pupils' work and teachers' planning are scrutinised by senior management and co-ordinators to ensure that teaching and marking are meeting the standards required. Regular lesson observations are undertaken by senior leaders, and subject co-ordinators carry out full audits of their subjects, which also include lesson observations. As well as this, in response to the previous inspection, teachers' observations of each other's lessons to share best practice are well established.
- 5.9 A thorough appraisal system for all staff is linked to personal and professional targets and the training and support necessary to achieve them. Careful induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements, and a comprehensive staff handbook gives them further guidance.
- 5.10 The school has a wide range of effective procedures and policies outlining its provision in all areas of education, pastoral care and welfare. These policies are rigorously implemented and indicate clearly the principles on which the pupils' education is based. Systems for pastoral care and welfare, health and safety are carefully monitored. All appointments of staff and volunteers follow scrupulously the principles of safer recruitment, and the necessary checks are suitably recorded in the central register and individual files.
- 5.11 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. The responses to the parents' questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and showed that parents are highly supportive of the school. They are particularly happy with the way that their children are cared for, the communication they receive from the school and the progress their children are making, both in their academic and emotional development. The great majority of parents commented that they are satisfied with the way in which the school handles any concerns. The school has a suitable policy for complaints and on the rare occasions when it has been used, concerns have been handled in line with stated procedures.
- 5.12 The school operates an open-door policy and encourages parents to speak to staff if they have any concerns or would like to discuss their children's progress. Much information is available to the parents of current and prospective pupils. A lively and informative website provides valuable information about school life. The school prospectus, the comprehensive parents' handbook and transition booklets produced for each stage of pupils' development provide clear details about the curriculum, what is required and expected, and the role parents can play in the education of their children. Full and detailed reports are sent home at the end of the year, and parents' consultation meetings in the autumn and spring terms give parents an opportunity to view pupils' work.
- 5.13 Parents have numerous opportunities to be fully involved in school life, including representation on the governing body and singing in the staff-parent choir. Parents attend class assemblies, concerts, sporting events and school celebrations. They are welcome to provide support in classes, and contribute to cultural and religious celebrations that have included Chinese New Year, a Greek day and Diwali.

- 5.14 An active parents' group is very successful in arranging a variety of social and fund-raising events. All of these are extremely popular and well supported across the school; they include an autumn tea party, fireworks night, quiz night and cake sales.

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 early years provision is outstanding. The creative curriculum is broad and exciting, successfully fulfilling the school's vision of inspiring each child to love learning. The curriculum encompasses the prime and specific areas of learning and helps almost all children to reach the level of development typical for their age, while the more able exceed expectation in many areas of their learning and development. Weekly timetabled activities provide numerous opportunities for children to learn both in their classroom and in the extensive outside learning environment; for example, an exciting pretend lion hunt in the meadow captured the imagination of younger Nursery children. Many opportunities are provided for Reception children to relate their growing knowledge to real life situations: they enthusiastically and accurately decided on the correct coins to buy items ranging from 10 to 20 pence and beyond in a shopping activity. An excellent balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning is always assured. Children benefit from some excellent specialist teaching and from the age of two they have two swimming lessons each week, which greatly enhance their physical development. Teachers know their children extremely well and match the excellent support they offer to each child's individual needs, ensuring that they all develop the necessary skills to learn effectively through play, exploration and active learning.
- 6.2 Children are highly motivated and enjoy learning, inspired by the many exciting activities that teachers plan for them. Teaching strategies and timely support and intervention ensure that all children make excellent progress relative to their starting points. Strong links have been established with parents, who, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, indicated overwhelming support for the school. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's achievements and progress; they are invited to two consultation evenings, and the detailed and informative end-of-year report clearly indicates each child's level of progress and development, assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Parents are invited to share their children's 'wow moments', observed at home, so that they form part of their comprehensive learning records.

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

- 6.3 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Teachers and support staff ensure that all children, including those in need of additional support, enjoy very positive relationships with adults and form secure emotional attachments. From the youngest age children are taught signing to facilitate strong communication with all adults and their peers, several of whom have speech and language difficulties. Children trust the adults who work with them and clearly feel safe and secure at school. Teachers liaise closely with parents to ensure that all individual requirements, for example the sleeping routines of the babies, are very well met. A high priority is placed on encouraging independence and enhancing self-esteem. High standards of behaviour are expected and achieved, with 'house tokens' awarded in Reception.
- 6.4 Adults help children to understand the importance of listening to others, showing respect, sharing, co-operating and taking turns. Children respond exceptionally well

to the encouragement and praise of adults. They understand the importance of physical activity and enjoy healthy snacks and nutritious lunches. Children are actively encouraged to be independent, and many, including those of a young age, can feed themselves using appropriate cutlery. From the age of two, children work towards independence when putting on their wellington boots and changing into their physical education kit or swimming suits.

- 6.5 Arrangements for transition are excellent and numerous opportunities are provided for children to spend time in the next room or with the next teacher, all of which is carefully supported by key people. Parents are also given transition guidance through informative brochures. This all contributes positively to a very smooth transition, ensuring that all children are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

- 6.6 Leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. The governors' involvement in the EYFS is effective and they fulfil their responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements. The setting benefits from strong leadership and an excellent management structure. Leaders are well supported by a committed team, whose members are clear in their roles and responsibilities.

- 6.7 Systems for monitoring and evaluating practice in the setting are comprehensive and rigorous. Staff have received full child protection training and fully understand health and safety procedures. The school nurse and teachers trained in paediatric first aid ensure that children's medical needs and any playground accidents are dealt with appropriately. Policies are reviewed and updated, and staff meet weekly to discuss pastoral matters, timetabled events and children's progress. The assessment of children's learning and development is thorough and very well documented in comprehensive learning records. Effective systems are in place for the supervision of staff and staff appraisal. There are many opportunities for staff to engage in continuous professional development. A positive and effective partnership has been established with parents, the local authority and other external agencies to ensure that children receive the support that they need.

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

- 6.8 The quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. All children, including the youngest, the more able and those with SEND or EAL, make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points. They are all highly articulate and confidently share their ideas and news with others. Children are extremely confident, making decisions for themselves, with younger children often selecting learning experiences in the outdoor environment. They relish looking after and petting the guinea pigs. They enjoy their snacks and school lunches, and eat independently.
- 6.9 Children between 18 months and 2 years are increasingly independent; they can find their own coats and take their shoes off. They enjoy exploring the outside learning environment, for example looking for bugs under flowerpots, and can ride on wheeled toys using pedals. Two year olds have excellent physical development and can pour water from a jug, cut around shapes with scissors confidently and throw a ball into a net. They are beginning to create representations of an event when painting and are highly creative.

- 6.10 Children in the Nursery enjoy retelling a familiar tale using story telling language and character voices. They can recognise and read familiar words and simple sentences using sound and picture clues. Working with numbers, they can count a random selection of objects up to 12 and recognise and order numbers to 15 and beyond. Their physical skills are highly developed and they enjoy the climbing wall, running, skipping and swimming. Children in Reception can read simple sentences, while the more able are reading complex sentences fluently and with good expression. They are beginning to spell words independently, making plausible phonetic attempts at more complex words. They use letter cards, word books and 'writing ladders' to support their independent writing. The more able write sentences with consistent punctuation. Children enjoy working with numbers and most have an understanding of number bonds to ten and beyond. They can solve real life problems by counting in twos, fives and tens.
- 6.11 Children enjoy taking responsibility and each Reception class has a daily helper who takes the register to the office and gives out book bags. By the end of the Reception year almost all children reach expected levels of achievement, while the more able exceed expectation in many areas of their development. Leadership and management of the setting demonstrate a commitment to evaluating practice and to securing continuous improvement.
- 6.12 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

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