



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

MALDON COURT PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Maldon Court Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Maldon Court Preparatory School
DfE Number	881/6027
Address	Maldon Court Preparatory School 10 Silver Street Maldon Essex CM9 4QE
Telephone Number	01621 853529
Fax Number	01621 874606
Email Address	enquiries@maldoncourtschool.org
Headteacher	Mrs Loraine Guest
Proprietors	Mrs Loraine Guest and Mr Stephen Guest
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	134
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (69 boys; 65 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 40 5-11: 94
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Coralie Saggs
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	07 May 2013 to 10 May 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 June 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. 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 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

Mr Paul Spillane

Mr Dominic Crehan

Mrs Sue Bennett

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	4
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	9
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	10
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	11
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
(a) The quality of governance	12
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	12

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Maldon Court is an independent day school for boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven. Founded in 1956, it is situated in the market town of Maldon, Essex. One of the two proprietors of the school is the headteacher. A 'board of visitors' supports them in the governance of the school.
- 1.2 The main building of the school is a Grade II listed 18th century town house, and a Grade II listed coach house provides three classrooms and a school office.
- 1.3 The school aims: to foster a love of learning in which the varied talents of each pupil are recognised and valued; to provide a stimulating curriculum through which the pupils can flourish and become enthusiastic and independent learners, and to encourage them to reach their full potential; to promote the traditional values of kindness, respect and courtesy; to encourage social awareness and respect for others by involvement in the local and wider community; and to create confident, happy pupils who are well prepared for their next step in education.
- 1.4 There are 134 pupils in the school (69 boys and 65 girls), of whom 40 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The ability profile of the school is above the national average. The vast majority of pupils are above average and none is below average. Most pupils come from business or professional families based locally. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic minorities. Two pupils have English as an additional language; they do not need specialist support for their English. The school has identified eight pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist learning support; none has a statement of special educational needs.

- 1.5 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
Pre-Prep	Nursery
Reception	Reception

Years 1 to 6

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 1
Form 2	Year 2
Form 3	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4
Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The pupils' positive approach to their studies and exemplary classroom behaviour, and high quality committed teaching are reflected in their very good progress and excellent academic achievement at all levels. In their response to the questionnaire, the pupils affirmed that they are very pleased with their progress. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material covered in their syllabuses. Significant development of information and communication technology (ICT) has taken place in recent years. The pupils reach high standards of personal fulfilment. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich their educational experience and enable them to develop their talents and aptitudes enjoyably and fruitfully. In the EYFS, as elsewhere, the needs of all the children are successfully met: the staff create a safe, lively environment where every child is highly valued, and consequently the children make very good progress in their learning and development.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent, reflecting the school's highly effective emphasis on their safeguarding and well-being. The caring and supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way in which pupils behave towards each other. They show genuine concern for one another's welfare and grow strongly in self-awareness and self-esteem. Relationships are excellent throughout the school, which is a happy place: the pupils are very proud of it and feel a strong sense of belonging. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities for leadership and service, and take their responsibilities seriously. Medical arrangements are good, though a written record is not made every time a pupil reports that he or she feels unwell. Parents commend the high standards of behaviour, and evidence gathered during the inspection fully supports this view.
- 2.3 That the school's aims are being realised well is a testimony to the high quality of governance and to the dedicated leadership and clear direction from senior management. Leadership demonstrates vision and is energetic and self-critical, seeking further to improve its effectiveness. Taking their lead from the top, all staff put the best interests of the pupils at the heart of their work. Efficient management ensures that the school runs smoothly. The two regulatory deficiencies identified at the previous inspection have been rectified and all of the recommendations have been adopted. The school enjoys extremely good relations with parents, who express great satisfaction with the education that their children are receiving and the way in which the school is being run.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that a written record is kept of all pupils who report that they feel unwell.

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 In the EYFS, children greatly enjoy their learning experiences and make significant progress from their individual starting points. They concentrate exceptionally well during activities and relish opportunities to investigate and explore, such as using magnifying glasses to study 'mini-beasts'. The youngest children ably recognise and write initial sounds. They are familiar with two-dimensional shapes and count confidently to ten. Older children read simple text fluently and write sentences with correct use of early punctuation skills. They use tally charts competently and can double numbers within ten. Children are articulate and confidently contribute their thoughts and ideas to discussion. All children achieve at least their expected levels of attainment by the end of the Reception year.
- 3.3 In Years 1 to 6, the pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their lessons. The overall standard of logical thought, application of mathematics, creativity, literacy, articulacy and proficiency in ICT is high. Almost all of the leavers in Year 6 proceed to their first-choice schools, several winning scholarships each year. A high number of awards in English Speaking Board examinations have been achieved. Pupils have won every category in the Maldon in Bloom art competition, they are the winners of an area swimming gala and athletics championship, and musicians have all won their respective group heats in the Rotary Club of Colchester Festival of Music and Dance. The choir performs to a high standard. Pupils avail themselves of the various opportunities for developing their talents and personal qualities, with the senior pupils in particular achieving high levels of fulfilment as they conscientiously discharge their duties in positions of responsibility and service.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for 2010 to 2012: these are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of seven are above the national average for maintained primary schools, and in 2010 reading was well above average. Results in national tests at the age of eleven are well above the national average for maintained primary schools. In 2012 they were exceptional. The level of attainment in national tests at the age of eleven indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, with a high rate of progress in 2012. Specialist support contributes to the good or rapid progress made both by pupils with SEND and by gifted and talented pupils. Evidence for this progress includes lesson observations, scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and examination of standardised measures of progress. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils agreed that they are making good academic progress.
- 3.5 Throughout the school the pupils display an excellent attitude to learning, in fulfilment of the school's aims. They apply themselves with evident enjoyment, keen to do well and to be challenged. Enthusiastic participants in their lessons, they are readily responsive, offering answers and opinions articulately and confidently. Their behaviour in class is exemplary. They work conscientiously, displaying perseverance and determination. Pupils take a great deal of time and trouble over their extended topic-based projects, some of which are of exceptional quality. When working in pairs or groups, they co-operate very well. They produce a good volume of work that is, on the whole, extremely neatly presented, reflecting pride and care.

Excellent work is displayed on classroom walls. In their responses to the questionnaire, the pupils unanimously affirmed that they find their work interesting and that they are encouraged to work independently, and this was borne out during the inspection. Pupils participate in extra-curricular activities in a similarly spirited and enthusiastic way.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The EYFS makes excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of the children who attend. The setting's educational provision is highly inclusive, supporting all children, including those with SEND and the more able, extremely well. The educational programmes provide a vibrant breadth of opportunities that motivate children to learn. Individualised activities support children's needs very successfully. Specialist teaching for physical education (PE) and music further enhances the provision. The overall educational provision is instrumental in enabling the children to achieve their good levels of attainment.
- 3.8 The academic curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is well balanced and tailored to suit the needs of all the pupils. Pupils' linguistic skills benefit from learning French from Reception and Spanish from Year 3, with German as an optional after-school activity. At the previous inspection it was recommended that humanities be taught in a less fragmented way, and these subjects are now systematically integrated into the curriculum. The school was also recommended to make greater use of ICT resources, both across the curriculum and by individual pupils. In recent years the school has significantly developed its ICT resources, the quality of provision now being a strength. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, which are used very effectively by teachers. Pupils acquire a good range of ICT skills, which support their work in other subjects.
- 3.9 The curriculum and pupils' educational experience are enriched in various ways. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are enhanced by introduction of the English Speaking Board examinations, with excellent results. Better use is now being made of the library, both recreationally and for subject-based research. Extended projects and the whole school's 'investigation day' sharpen pupils' inquisitiveness and independence of thought. Year 6 pupils' participation in a regional inter-agency initiative enlightens them about risk in various contexts. In their week at an activities centre, they develop teamwork skills, self-reliance and self-confidence. The enrichment programme for Years 3 to 6 gives pupils some understanding of areas outside the mainstream curriculum, such as engineering and enterprise.
- 3.10 Pupils needing either additional support or extra challenge are well provided for across the curriculum. Every pupil with SEND has an individual education plan with realistic targets. This plan is shared not only with teachers but also with the pupil's parents. Form teachers and classroom assistants often provide support to pupils, either individually or in small groups. The ablest pupils receive extension work in various subjects; they undertake challenging projects and participate in competitions outside school.
- 3.11 The introduction of specialist PE teaching has been accompanied by the provision of additional sports, such as dodgeball and fencing, and by pupils' participation in a wider variety of competitions. Similarly, with the introduction of specialist music teaching, more pupils are learning musical instruments and participation in

competitions outside school has increased. A good range of lunchtime and after-school activities enables pupils to develop their skills and talents.

- 3.12 The school is actively involved in the life of the community, supporting the mayor's charities, sponsoring the carnival and helping local good causes. The choir performs in the community and pupils take part in local competitions and cultural activities. Pupils are allocated to one of three houses, Australia, Canada or New Zealand, and links are made to schools in those countries. Pupils also sponsor a number of children in a school in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The curriculum is further enriched by regular educational trips and visits, and by participation in initiatives such as World Book Day.
- 3.13 The many bright displays and notices around the school accurately reflect a busy, lively environment where the pupils broaden their horizons and understanding by experiencing a wide range of educational opportunities. The school succeeds in its aim of providing a stimulating curriculum through which the pupils flourish, becoming enthusiastic and independent learners.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Experienced EYFS staff have a thorough understanding of how young children learn and develop. They plan stimulating activities, which include an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities. Comprehensive assessment and observation processes clearly identify children's next stages in learning. Staff engage extremely well with children, encouraging them to explore and become active learners. Excellent questioning techniques challenge children's independent thinking, such as in a discussion on the differences between information and storybooks. These skills help to prepare children extremely well for their future learning experiences.
- 3.16 Over two-thirds of the teaching observed in Years 1 to 6 was excellent and the remainder was good. This high quality of teaching engages and motivates the pupils, enabling them to make good and often rapid progress with their learning. This accords with the school's aim to foster a love of learning in which the varied talents of each pupil are recognised and valued. Teachers know their pupils extremely well, and the strong relationships between them ensure a harmonious working environment. This is particularly evident in oral lessons, where pupils participate confidently in open, lively discussions. In many of the lessons observed, teachers used questioning and dialogue very effectively to engage and challenge pupils.
- 3.17 Lessons are planned to ensure excellent subject coverage and have clear objectives. Time is managed very well and lessons have excellent pace. Since the previous inspection, teachers have significantly increased the use of ICT resources, both across the curriculum and by individual pupils, in order to develop pupils' learning. They have access to a good bank of resources, including a well-equipped ICT room and the interactive whiteboards. A variety of attractive, colourful displays demonstrates the range and depth of teaching across the curriculum, and the 'space' theme exemplifies teachers' excellent teamwork and joint planning. Highly collaborative and knowledgeable about their subjects, teachers share good practice so that teaching methods enable pupils to think for themselves and explore their ideas, as recommended at the previous inspection.

- 3.18 Where appropriate, a variety of suitably challenging work is set for pupils of different abilities, allowing all to progress at their own best pace. Educational support for pupils, including those with SEND, is utilised very effectively. The progress of the ablest pupils is accelerated by extension work during lessons, the enrichment programme and a variety of competitions.
- 3.19 Pupils self-assess their work competently, using a 'traffic light' colour code system. In peer assessment, pupils are confident and articulate when providing mature feedback on others' work. Paired and group work is used effectively, and teachers interact with both individuals and groups to assess understanding and progress and to set appropriate tasks and challenges.
- 3.20 Teachers' marking is prompt and positive. The best examples give helpful guidance for improvement and pose questions to which the pupils respond. Pupils affirm that their teachers are genuinely interested in their progress and give time willingly outside lessons to help them improve and overcome difficulties. Comprehensive data on academic achievement is used effectively to track progress and to inform both planning and target setting across the full age range of pupils.

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 In the EYFS, the children's personal and emotional development is excellent. They feel safe, secure and happy within the setting's warm, nurturing environment. They develop a strong social awareness and understand the importance of making a positive contribution towards school life. Children relish responsibility roles, such as being classroom monitors in helping with daily routines. The setting's excellent support for children's personal development enables them to become confident, self-reliant individuals and prepares them extremely well for their move to the next stage of their education.
- 4.3 Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have excellent spiritual awareness. Their self-esteem is high because they are valued as individuals, and their achievements are celebrated in assemblies, on notice boards, in newsletters and in classroom displays. Pupils' self-confidence is enhanced opportunities to represent the school in public, for instance at a Remembrance Day service, visiting the elderly and singing in the community. Proud of their school, the pupils feel confident and valued in its supportive family atmosphere. At all stages, pupils' strong personal development is reflected in their maturity and self-discipline.
- 4.4 The pupils' clear moral sense is evident throughout the school. They understand right and wrong, and recognise importance in good manners and respect and tolerance for others. They appreciate the rewards they receive, which recognise good behaviour and effort and excellence in work.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Their positive response to those around them is both sensitive and considerate. They show respect for one another in the way they work, play co-operatively and help one another. Senior pupils lead by example and the 'buddy' system fosters excellent relationships across the age range. Pupils take pride in being chosen for a post of responsibility and they take their duties seriously. Proposals made by the school council, the eco committee and the healthy schools committee have led to various improvements and initiatives. Pupils are committed to helping others by raising funds for their chosen charities in the local community and further afield. They take real pride in such activities, ranging from the support of national campaigns to donating harvest gifts to local residents. The school successfully fulfils its stated aim for pupils to develop social awareness and a respect for others by involvement in the local and wider community.
- 4.6 From diverse backgrounds, pupils learn and play together naturally and harmoniously across the school. They gain insight into their own and other cultures from their fellow pupils and are able to appreciate other traditions and their festivals. Pupils acquire knowledge of life and culture in Australia, Canada and New Zealand through the named houses.
- 4.7 At all ages, pupils have achieved an excellent level of personal development as they move on to the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, the provision for children's well-being is excellent. The fully embedded key person system nurtures strong bonds with children. Children happily share their concerns and ask for staff support when they need it. The staff are dedicated, serving as excellent role models, and create a safe and caring environment. Consequently, the children greatly enjoy their learning experiences and confidently make choices between activities as they explore their surroundings. Staff make extensive use of positive praise to promote children's self-esteem. Children behave exceptionally well; they are keen to meet staff expectations. Children have excellent relationships with staff and with one another. They share toys, take turns, and respect and help their peers.
- 4.10 Pupils' personal development in Years 1 to 6 is exceptionally well fostered by the highly nurturing support and guidance provided by all staff. Pupils say that they feel extremely secure. Self-assured, pupils speak enthusiastically about moving to their senior school and are keen to embrace their new challenges. The school is consequently successful in fulfilling its aim to create confident, happy pupils who are well prepared for their next step in education.
- 4.11 Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are excellent, based on trust and mutual support. Systems of pastoral care are supported by clear policies and implemented successfully. During interviews and conversations, pupils were clear to whom they could turn with a concern. They feel confident and safe, and say that there is always an adult available to offer advice, reassurance and guidance. This was reflected in the overwhelmingly positive responses to the pupils' questionnaire. Pupils understand that bullying is unacceptable: it is not a concern in the school and pupils say that any instances would be dealt with quickly and fairly. They appreciate the need for school rules and feel that the system of rewards and sanctions is fair. Pupils conform readily to the standards expected, and so disciplinary action is rarely necessary.
- 4.12 Healthy eating is encouraged. While limited in choice, lunches are nutritious and are prepared and served in hygienic conditions. All dietary requirements are catered for. Pupils are very complimentary about the school food. Children in the EYFS are encouraged to be independent in their self-care. They competently organise their personal belongings and understand the importance of washing hands before meals. The school makes excellent use of its playground, fitness trail and local playing fields to promote extended physical exercise. The daily outdoor access provides excellent opportunities for children in the EYFS to enjoy fresh air and exercise. The school has a comprehensive plan to improve access for pupils with disabilities.
- 4.13 The school gives careful attention to pupils' views. An effective school council meets regularly and practical suggestions are acted on by the school: this has led to extra games facilities and alterations to the lunch menu. The 'eco' committee and the healthy schools committee have also made proposals that have been adopted. The weekly 'heads of school' meetings provide another forum for pupils' views to be heard.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are seen as being of paramount importance. Highly effective, they cover all aspects of the life of the school, including the EYFS.
- 4.16 Clear procedures for safeguarding pupils and eliminating discrimination are implemented highly effectively. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly. The deficiencies relating to washrooms identified at the previous inspection have been rectified. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection at specified intervals, and are supported by designated people and by effective links with the local authority's designated officer.
- 4.17 The school provides effectively for ill or injured pupils. The needs of pupils with existing medical conditions are well known to staff. Medical facilities comply with regulations and detailed records of accidents and illness are filed. Seven members of staff are qualified in first aid and two of these are trained at the higher level. They are immediately consulted on any matters of concern, with action taken as appropriate. A written record is not, however, kept every time a pupil reports feeling unwell.
- 4.18 A range of excellent policies and procedures promotes a safe environment. Pupils' access to the internet is filtered. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. A fire safety consultant has recently reported on all aspects of the school's provision for fire prevention and fire practices are held regularly. Electrical equipment is monitored through portable appliance testing. Risk assessments are comprehensive for relevant activities in and out of school. Staff receive training in aspects of welfare such as first aid in the workplace, paediatric first aid, food hygiene, fire prevention and use of devices to treat allergic reactions. In the EYFS, staff strongly promote children's understanding of safety by, for instance, explaining the importance of wearing sunhats and of taking care when using scissors. Excellent supervision levels, thorough risk assessments and emergency evacuation procedures further ensure the safety of children in the EYFS.
- 4.19 Issues of health and safety are raised at weekly management meetings. In response to the regulatory non-compliance reported at the previous inspection, hot running water is now provided in all washrooms and two new lavatories have been installed. Closed-circuit television cameras and external lighting have been introduced as security measures.
- 4.20 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored, with a system of immediate response to pupil absence.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 With their close involvement and acute insight into the school, the proprietors exercise diligent and effective oversight of educational standards; financial and strategic planning; investment in staff, accommodation and resources; welfare, health and safety; and child protection. Policies are regularly reviewed and the proprietors undertake a thorough annual review of the implementation and effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. The proprietors provide highly effective support for the EYFS setting.
- 5.3 The proprietors are assisted by the 'board of visitors', whose members' objective perspective is facilitated by their experience and distance from the day-to-day running of the school. They support and advise senior management and are available to arbitrate in the event of a complaint.
- 5.4 In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, the school has devised a school improvement plan that is more focused and carefully prioritised. The present development plan is detailed and ambitious, displaying a clear and imaginative vision for the school's future. Realistic short-, medium- and long-term targets are identified, with suitable timescales for their successful achievement.

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 throughout the school, including the EYFS, are of a high standard, in accordance with the views of all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire. The school is led with drive and energy, and the senior management team works purposefully and collaboratively to promote the school's vision. The high quality of education and the excellent pastoral care provided for pupils reflect the dedication and commitment of all of the staff.
- 5.7 The school is very well run on a day-to-day basis, ensuring a learning environment in which pupils are secure and where they enjoy high quality teaching and resources. Very good systems of communication within the school ensure a sense of corporate involvement and purpose; they also enable any concerns to be resolved at an early stage. A notable feature of comprehensive attention to the individual is the weekly report to leadership on every pupil in the school. There is a stated 'open door' policy and the accessibility of all staff is appreciated by pupils and parents. The senior management team has created a culture of trust and co-operation which is endorsed by the teaching and ancillary staff alike.
- 5.8 Leadership and management have implemented detailed policies and procedures for all aspects of school life which ensure its smooth operation and the provision of an excellent educational experience. Grounds, buildings and facilities are very well maintained, so that they provide an attractive and stimulating setting in which pupils learn and develop. Senior managers, including those in the EYFS, have a thorough

understanding of their statutory obligations, especially for child protection, and the school is compliant with all required regulations. The school's procedures for the recruitment and appointment of staff are appropriate and the centralised register of appointments is accurately completed. Induction arrangements, including those for newly qualified teachers, are thorough: they help staff to settle in and are tailored to meet the needs of individuals. Safeguarding procedures are effective; all staff are appropriately trained for their roles in meeting the needs of pupils with regard to child protection, welfare, health and safety.

- 5.9 Detailed self-evaluation leads to the setting and prioritising of targets that are successfully met. Curricular planning has been developed with a particular focus on accommodating the needs of all pupils, including the most able and those with SEND. The school has successfully addressed a recommendation from the previous inspection by improving the systems for planning and assessment. Educational programmes in the EYFS are regularly monitored, ensuring consistent support for all the children's needs. Managers in the setting implement highly effective self-evaluation systems, which identify clear priorities for future development and ensure a vision for continuous improvement. Regular meetings enable all staff to be involved in the evaluation processes. The teaching and learning policy for Years 1 to 6, which emphasises high standards, enjoyment and maximising the efforts of each individual pupil, is consistently applied throughout the school. Comprehensive recording of information from tests and assessments enables the close tracking of individual pupils' progress, with remedial action being taken where necessary. Here, as elsewhere, members of staff liaise closely in the pupils' best interests.
- 5.10 Leadership actively promotes the continuing professional development of the staff. The effective appraisal system for all teaching staff includes lesson observations, discussions and scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff develop their skills through many appropriate training activities, both within school and beyond. The sharing and discussion of good practice are promoted not only through peer observation but also through membership of a consortium of local schools. In the EYFS, comprehensive staff appraisal and supervision arrangements ensure that professional development and training needs are very well provided for.
- 5.11 Parents are highly satisfied with the education provided for their children. They are fully supportive of the school and value its ethos. The excellent relationships between home and school are supported by the ready availability of school leaders to listen and provide advice when necessary. Parents and school work in partnership, to the considerable benefit of the pupils. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents were almost entirely positive about the school. There were no concerns raised by significant numbers of parents. Parents were unanimous that they are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. The thriving parents' association contributes positively to school life through its range of social and fund-raising activities. Parents appreciate that information, including all that is required, is readily available to them and they are pleased with the way in which the school handles any concerns. The school complaints procedure meets all the regulatory requirements.
- 5.12 Arrangements to admit pupils are well established and implemented. Parents benefit from regular communication through weekly newsletters and an extensive chronicle of the school year. The school's recently developed 'app' supports the useful information on the website and the headteacher writes a daily blog. Detailed annual written reports and biannual parents' evenings inform parents of their

children's academic and general progress; parents value the readiness of staff to discuss matters of interest or concern at any time. As they make decisions about their children's move to senior school, parents are very helpfully guided by means of scheduled meetings and individual advice.

- 5.13 In the EYFS, links with parents are exceptionally strong. Highly effective induction processes help new children to settle quickly. The 'open door' policy ensures that parents receive excellent information on children's progress, including their targets for future learning. Yearly reports provide a succinct overview of children's achievements. Staff regularly share children's learning journals with parents and encourage them to be involved, such as contributing children's home achievements for display on the 'Special' board. During discussions and in response to the questionnaire, parents were unanimously positive about all aspects of the setting's provision. Excellent partnerships with parents and external agencies ensure that children's individual needs are extremely well supported.
- 5.14 In their responses to the questionnaire, parents all agree that they would recommend the school to other parents.

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