



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
THE GROVE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL**

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The Grove Independent School

Full Name of School	The Grove Independent School
DfE Number	826/6002
EYFS Number	EY366450
Address	The Grove Independent School Redland Drive Loughton Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK5 8HD
Telephone Number	01908 690590
Email Address	office@groveschool.co.uk
Head	Mrs Deborah Berkin
Age Range	0 to 12
Total Number of Pupils	236
Gender of Pupils	Mixed: (Boys 125; Girls 111)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 64 5-11: 127 3-5 (EYFS): 43 11-12: 2
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Emma Carlin
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	10 Jun 2014 to 13 Jun 2014

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 January 2011.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of the advisory board, observed a sample of 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 Pamela Leech	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Ann McDonnell	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathleen Silvester	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mrs Sally Gray	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Grove Independent School is a preparatory school situated in central Milton Keynes catering for boys and girls from birth to twelve years of age. It aims to inspire its pupils so that they develop a love for learning and a thoughtful, considerate attitude towards others. The school seeks to provide an excellent education within a caring community where all pupils are known and respected and encouraged to fulfil their potential. It sets out to create a welcoming family atmosphere which encourages strong moral and spiritual beliefs based on Christian values. At the time of the inspection there were 236 pupils on the roll, 125 boys and 111 girls, including 107 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.2 Founded in 1984 by the current proprietor, who is also the principal, the school accommodates pupils in purpose-built facilities. There is no governing body but since the previous inspection, an advisory board has been appointed. The grounds encompass a variety of play areas and, since the previous inspection, include a gardening space for pupils and an outdoor learning classroom.
- 1.3 The ability of the pupils is considered to be above the national average, based upon internally standardised tests; around a fifth of pupils are of well above average ability. The majority of the pupils belong to families in professional occupations and the school has a rich cultural mix. Eighteen pupils have been identified by the school as having special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom five are provided with learning support. Three pupils have a statement of educational needs. Two are learning English as an additional language (EAL).

- 1.4 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
Oak and Alder	Nursery
Ash and Willow	Nursery
Cherry and Elm	Nursery

Pre-preparatory Department

School	NC name
Maple and Walnut	Nursery
Beech and Holly	Reception
Larch and Rowan	Year 1
Birch and Cedar	Year 2

Preparatory Department

School	NC name
Aspen and Yew	Year 3
Hawthorn and Poplar	Year 4
Chestnut and Sycamore	Year 5
Acacia and Pine	Year 6
Spruce	Year 7

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school aims to provide a stimulating and welcoming community where pupils are inspired to learn and develop into kind, considerate young people and in this, the school is largely successful. In the EYFS children achieve well although the inconsistent planning of next steps slows progress for some children. Pupils throughout the school achieve well. They acquire competence with basic skills, and achieve high standards in English and mathematics. They become competent readers and are comfortable working with numbers. They confidently apply their understanding to science subjects and in problem solving. The excellent curriculum is well-balanced and provides a wide range of subjects. The extra-curricular programme is imaginative and diverse and well supported by further enrichment opportunities. Music, drama and dance are well catered for within the extended day provision. Good teaching allows pupils to make good progress overall. Pupils are well known as individuals and those with SEND or EAL, are offered individual educational plans and are extremely well supported. The more able pupils do not always receive sufficiently challenging tasks to promote and extend their learning; the recommendation made in the previous report remains to be fulfilled. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) competently; they enjoy their lessons and are highly motivated learners. Lessons are well planned and regular assessments allow pupils to make progress however procedures for monitoring the teaching and learning provision are not always effective. Good systems for assessment and tracking fully support the pupils' educational and pastoral needs.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' development is excellent. Pupils show respect for each other and for their teachers. They are proud of their school and the standard of behaviour is excellent. Pupils eagerly undertake positions of leadership and responsibility and make a positive contribution to their community. Pupils are supported by dedicated staff and receive an excellent level of pastoral care. They know to whom they can turn with a concern and are confident of receiving help and support. Excellent measures are in place to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the school is committed to promoting the wellbeing of its pupils in a caring and family atmosphere.
- 2.3 Governance is good. Following a recommendation from the previous report, an advisory board has been appointed and offers a wide range of experience, ably supporting and challenging senior management. Legal responsibilities for oversight are effectively fulfilled. Leadership and management is good. Leaders in the EYFS have clear divisions of responsibility and sufficient time to undertake their duties, and there is a clear development plan for the EYFS thus meeting recommendations from the previous report. Staff appraisal is effective and there are rigorous procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and for safeguarding pupils. Links with parents are positive.

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. Consistently apply procedures for the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to all parts of the school.
2. Provide appropriate challenge and extension in work for the most able pupils in all subjects.
3. Strengthen systems in the EYFS for the consistent monitoring of children's progress and the planning of next steps for the individual child.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievement and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated; their dedicated approach to learning supports them in achieving good standards at all ages. In accordance with the school's aims, pupils demonstrate a willingness to learn, a desire to achieve and a maturity of spirit. They are highly articulate and polite, listen carefully and confidently express their opinions. They achieve high standards in reading and are able to write fluently in all subjects across the curriculum. They develop a competent understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation and demonstrate a pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and competently apply logical and mathematical understanding to scientific subjects. They develop good skills in ICT, incorporating these techniques across other subjects, individual project work and within independent research.
- 3.3 Pupils are lively and imaginative in their art work; as demonstrated in the bright and colourful artwork displayed around the school, model making and three-dimensional sets of a very high standard created by pupils for a dramatic production. They are able to think logically and work independently as for example when undertaking computer design and using editing programmes to create pictures. Pupils enjoy working co-operatively and demonstrate purposeful and mature attitudes, for example, during an investigation when pupils worked in pairs to measure the quality of light in various outdoor areas. Pupils are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to develop the skills required to become independent learners. They participate successfully in sports and other physical activities enthusiastically.
- 3.4 Many pupils receive individual tuition in drama, dance and music and regularly achieve high standards in national awards. A number successfully enter local art, gymnastics, athletics and essay writing competitions.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but on the evidence available from discussions with pupils and from scrutiny of their work and performance in lessons and the results of internally assessed testing in English and mathematics, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Most pupils are successful in gaining entry to secondary schools of their choice and some achieve scholarships.
- 3.6 Pupils throughout the school make good progress in relation to their ability. Pupils with SEND make excellent progress supported by thorough planning and individually-tailored programmes of study. Pupils who have EAL quickly demonstrate an increasing familiarity and confidence with their use of English. More able pupils in each age group are identified by the school but specific provision to promote their learning is not yet consistent across all subjects and as a result, their progress is not as rapid as it might be.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages have excellent attitudes to learning and apply themselves with diligence and enthusiasm, demonstrating excellent work habits. They enjoy their learning and make the most of the opportunities presented to them.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum is broad, balanced and well-planned, fulfilling the school's aim to encourage and support all pupils to work towards their potential. The wide range of subjects prepares pupils for the challenges and responsibilities of life outside and beyond school by offering an experience of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. National Curriculum subjects are covered together with personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education (RE) and ICT. Modern foreign languages are taught by specialist teachers with French introduced in Reception and Spanish in Year 5, enhancing the linguistic experience for pupils. Thorough schemes of work underpin the curriculum and offer an excellent basis for the pupils' academic and personal development. The curriculum prepares pupils very well for the next stages of their education, as they progress from the pre-prep to the prep department as well as for entry to senior schools. Pupils are also prepared for scholarship examinations to independent schools in academic subjects, sport, music and drama.
- 3.10 Pupils with SEND and EAL are identified successfully and they are very well supported by specialist staff in addition to their class and subject teachers. The curriculum provided for them is individually tailored to meet their needs and is regularly reviewed to ensure progress. Provision for the more able pupils is less effective with fewer opportunities provided for extended learning in most cases.
- 3.11 The extended school day allows for an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. These are available for all pupils from Reception upwards and include a wide variety of clubs, outdoor education and fun activities. Pupils prepare for sports competitions and tournaments and the choir participates in choral festivals. Local links are strengthened by displays of the pupils' art work in the city centre and by the emphasis on supporting local charities. Pupils collect toys for Christmas children's charities and food to support the local animal charity. Pupils join in varied activities to raise money for an orphanage abroad.
- 3.12 Carefully planned trips and visits further strengthen and enrich the curriculum. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 enjoy an annual week away, learning how to live harmoniously together while enjoying an exciting range of outdoor and creative activities. Visits to a nearby castle reinforce learning in history and geography while more ambitious trips to France enhance the pupils' understanding of art and of the two world wars. Links with cultural institutions in London allow pupils to explore the world of music and drama. The notable aim that every pupil will have the opportunity to undertake a speaking role either in a drama production or in a church service whilst at the school, results in pupils gaining confidence in public speaking.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.14 Teaching ensures the pupils' progress and contributes effectively to their academic achievements and self-confidence as learners. In accordance with the school's aims, teaching marries traditional with modern teaching methods, using physical exploration of objects to reinforce abstract learning. It prepares pupils well for transition through the school and to their next school.
- 3.15 Teaching is generally well planned and benefits from excellent resources. The most successful teaching is imaginative and interesting and pupils learn at a rapid pace, taking delight in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are questioned skilfully to strengthen their understanding and there are frequent exchanges of ideas between teacher and pupils. In less successful teaching the pace is too slow and there are fewer opportunities for the active engagement of pupils or for teaching to probe and extend their thinking. Senior managers are gradually implementing procedures to monitor teaching and learning but these are not yet fully in place.
- 3.16 Teaching demonstrates good subject knowledge and pupils benefit from specialist subject teaching throughout the prep department. Basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics are taught thoroughly and highly effectively, providing a strong foundation for future learning. Classes are managed well with high expectations of work and behaviour, enabling pupils to make progress and succeed. Opportunities for independent study are provided both within lessons and in the form of individual projects for example, studying habitats in science, rivers in geography and undertaking field work in history. Pupils make good use of ICT for their research and in the presentation of findings. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work both independently and co-operatively in practical, evaluative and discursive aspects of their work. A few parents expressed concerns over homework set. The overwhelming majority of pupils, both in discussions with inspectors and in questionnaires, indicated that they find their homework helps their learning.
- 3.17 Teachers have highly positive relationships with pupils and know them extremely well. They are aware of pupils' different abilities and needs, though these are not always taken fully into account in the planning of teaching. Pupils with SEND are sensitively and individually supported with clear goals mapped out for them to work towards. Pupils with EAL are extremely well supported in class and by one-to-one tuition. A small minority of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that support for the more able pupils is less suitable and inspection supports this observation. Through scrutiny of their work, examination of subject planning and observation of lessons, inspectors found that whilst teaching encourages pupils who are more able to work diligently and strive to do well, there is not always sufficient challenge in the work they are set.
- 3.18 Work is regularly marked and useful indicators of attainment levels reached are recorded in exercise books; pupils both understand and appreciate these. There is a clear marking policy and pupils receive verbal feedback on how to improve although this is not always recorded. Targets are set that give pupils clear goals to work towards. Tests and assessments feature regularly and results are recorded to give a clear overview of progress, identify particular needs, and generally inform future planning. Older pupils are encouraged to evaluate some pieces of their own work with resultant insight into their own learning and progress.

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 This fulfils the school's aim to create an atmosphere of trust and respect where each individual is valued and appreciated as a unique person.
- 4.3 The high level of pupils' spiritual awareness is demonstrated in their appreciation of the non-material aspects of their community. Pupils watch their seeds grow with interest as they nurture the garden area. They are eager to explain displays of artefacts from different faiths and enjoy music and expression through drama and dance.
- 4.4 The quality of the pupils' moral development is excellent. They understand the difference between right and wrong and accept the rules which guide their daily behaviour. They share a keen sense of how to behave in classes and how to speak with their teachers, visitors and with each other. They strive to win house points for good behaviour or for achievement in their work.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils encourage and celebrate each other's achievements with genuine pleasure. They demonstrate awareness of each other's needs and are thoughtful in their behaviour towards each other. They learn about aspects of public life through visits from fire and police services and older pupils gain an understanding of the political system through discussions about the role of the monarch and Parliament. Pupils design and join in activities to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves, supporting both local and national charities.
- 4.6 A very few pupils did not feel that the school encourages them to undertake roles of responsibility. An incremental system of monitors throughout the school encourages pupils to develop leadership skills in positions such as librarians, house captains and sports captains thereby allowing them many opportunities to undertake roles of responsibility. Representatives from each class meet regularly to participate in the school council and senior pupils understand the importance of presenting a good example for younger pupils.
- 4.7 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils accept the wide cultural mix represented within the school community and enjoy exploring their different experiences as well as appreciating shared understanding. This was clearly demonstrated in a lesson where everyone spoke in their own language to create a modern tower of Babel and, after enjoying the confusion, equally appreciated being able to understand one another when the lesson reverted to English and they could share their feelings with each other. Pupils learn about cultures and faiths that differ from their own as well as understanding the Western cultural traditions. They participate in music, drama, art and dance within and beyond the curriculum. Through these opportunities and supported by their community, pupils develop excellent and mature standards of personal development by the time they leave the school.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of the school's arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school's aims to provide a building as well as an atmosphere where pupils can thrive are well met. Staff know the pupils extremely well and are highly effective in monitoring and meeting individual pastoral needs. The extended school day provides additional care for pupils whose parents are at work and includes tea, homework time and many wide-ranging activities. A tutor period at the start and end of each day enables staff to offer pupils a high level of support and encouragement. Parents are highly appreciative of the care their children receive and feel they are well looked after.
- 4.10 A few parents and pupils expressed concerns about the way bullying is handled. Inspectors found that the school's anti-bullying policy is rigorous and correctly implemented. The code of conduct and playground rules are readily adhered to and clearly understood by pupils who recognise the unkindness of bullying. Pupils speaking with inspectors were clear that any incidents of bullying are taken seriously by the school and properly dealt with. A small minority of parents felt that the school does not do enough to encourage good behaviour. Inspectors found that the school effectively promotes good behaviour and observed excellent behaviour by pupils when moving around the school. Pupils are polite and well-mannered, showing care and consideration for each other, their teachers and visitors.
- 4.11 Pupils feel safe and secure. A very small minority responding to the questionnaire were unsure where to seek help but in discussion with inspectors, pupils were confident that they can turn for help to adults or other children if they have difficulties. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils are highly positive. The school cares extremely well for pupils and encourages them to care for others, making the environment a good place for everyone.
- 4.12 The school provides well balanced and nutritious food, encouraging pupils to eat healthily and pursue a healthy lifestyle. They learn about the importance of fitness, exercise and balanced diet in assemblies, PSHE lessons and in many other aspects of the curriculum. They are given many opportunities to take part in healthy exercise through sports lessons, active playtimes and in a wide variety of sports and activities clubs. Spotlessly clean buildings, with imaginatively planned play areas, enhance the care provided.
- 4.13 A very few pupils responding to the questionnaire felt that the school did not seek their opinions or respond to them. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Pupils are able to use suggestion boxes to share their views with the elected school council. Their ideas for improving the school environment are listened to and implemented where appropriate as for example, in the recent provision of a wood-chipped play area.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.15 The quality of welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 The school makes excellent arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Safeguarding policies are rigorous and correct procedures are in place and thoroughly implemented. Appropriate staff training in child protection is undertaken by senior managers with excellent systems in place for the induction of new members of staff.
- 4.17 Every effort is made to minimise the risk to pupils of fire. Regular fire drills and weekly fire alarm tests are carried out and meticulously recorded. Risk assessments are thorough and correctly recorded. Electrical appliances are regularly tested and appropriate records kept. Comprehensive risk assessments for buildings and grounds are updated annually. Drinking water is available at all times of the school day. Toilets are conveniently sited and appropriately designated for boys or girls with excellent facilities for disabled users.
- 4.18 Appropriate policies are implemented to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils in school and on educational trips and visits. A suitable number of staff have received training in first aid and those with responsibility for younger children have received paediatric first aid training. There is a designated room where pupils who are unwell are cared for until collected by parents. Medication is correctly stored and administered with appropriate recording systems and parental consent in place. Admission and attendance records are suitably maintained and stored. Premises are clean and well maintained.

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 is undertaken by the principal who is also the school's sole proprietor. Since the previous inspection an advisory board, with a wide range of experience and expertise, has been appointed. The advisory board is gradually undertaking a review of all matters pertaining to governance and beginning to offer an additional and more independent source of challenge and support to the existing management structure. This meets one of four recommendations from the previous inspection. Suitable progress has been made on tackling other recommendations but one relating to the early years provision remains largely outstanding. The initial vision and founding ethos of the school has been extremely well maintained and extended in development plans which have led to the building of substantial new facilities to be completed within the next school year. Highly effective financial oversight has enabled the school to continue to invest in good quality resources, appropriate facilities and high quality staffing.
- 5.3 Governance shows excellent insight into the overall working of the school and staff, pupils and parents have appropriate access to the proprietor as needed. Responsibility for the oversight of child protection and welfare, health and safety throughout the school is discharged meticulously. An annual review of the safeguarding policy and practice is correctly undertaken and procedures for the appointment of staff are properly implemented and recorded.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, is good.
- 5.5 Effective leadership enables the school to meet its aims to provide a highly nurturing environment where pupils feel safe and happy and are encouraged to do their best. A clear educational direction, supported by a strong focus on meeting the needs of individual pupils, has resulted in excellent provision for pupils with SEND and EAL, promoting their learning and achievement. Provision for the more able pupils is not yet as fully effective. Procedures for monitoring standards of teaching and learning, such as peer observation and termly moderation meetings, have been introduced but are not yet consistently applied across all areas of the educational provision.
- 5.6 A small minority of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that the school is not well led or managed because they felt the leadership was not sufficiently independent of the ownership of the school. Inspectors found that the positive academic outcomes for pupils are well-supported by effective management structures with appropriate systems to evaluate the pupils' ability and progress. A well-developed tutor system contributes positively to the welfare of pupils, promoting very high levels of personal development. Staff receive regular appraisals and benefit from training opportunities and induction training for new staff is thorough and well managed.
- 5.7 Systems for the recruitment of suitable staff are rigorous and all staff receive thorough and regular training in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and

safety. Policies are effective and properly implemented. The school is diligent in carrying out checks to ensure the suitability of staff, members of the advisory board and others as required.

- 5.8 Links with parents are a strong feature of the school and ably support pupils' achievements and their personal development. Parents are appreciative of the school, the vast majority expressing their satisfaction with the education and support provided and commenting warmly on the family atmosphere in the school.
- 5.9 The school's leadership and staff are readily available to speak with parents at the beginning and end of each day. The school's administration team are welcoming and deal helpfully with general enquiries. A small minority of parents do not feel that the school handles complaints well or gives timely responses to questions. The school complaints policy meets the regulatory requirements and an examination of records and discussions with parents indicates that any concerns are dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- 5.10 Parents of pupils and prospective parents are provided with the requisite information about the school through the web site and the prospectus. In the parental questionnaire, a few parents were not satisfied with the level of communication from the school but following discussion with parents and on examination of the variety of communications available, inspection judged that parents were provided with a high level of information. Parents receive regular newsletters, a termly magazine and an annual calendar of events card. They are further updated by posters of events around the school, messages sent home, social media and through the e-mail system.
- 5.11 Similarly, a few parents felt they do not receive sufficient information on their child's progress. Inspectors found that parents are kept well informed of their children's work and progress through their child's message book, reading record and homework diary, transition meetings and class information evenings at the start of the school year. Parent consultations are held twice a year. Half-termly grading updates for achievement and effort are sent home with a full and detailed annual report in the summer.
- 5.12 Parents have a number of opportunities to be involved in school life, though a very small minority feel the school could do more. Whilst parents are not invited to participate in school trips they are welcomed at sporting, music and drama events throughout the year and to class assemblies. The active parents' association enthusiastically supports the school by organising social and fund raising events, such as the barbecue and bike ride and recently provided funding towards the outdoor woodland classroom.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 6.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Conscientious and supportive staff successfully create a homely atmosphere where children can progress well in line with the school's values and ethos. Practitioners demonstrate high expectations; they enthuse, engage and motivate children. Staff provide planned, purposeful activities across the early years educational programmes, with child-initiated and adult-led activities, so that children are able to develop and learn indoors and outdoors, using a range of suitable resources. This strong provision enables children who have been identified as having SEND or EAL to make very good progress. All children are supported to be ready for the next stages in their learning.
- 6.2 Children concentrate, express themselves clearly and enjoy their learning. Activities such as the older children observing the mini-beasts in the vivarium, and the younger experiencing different textures with soapsuds and coloured rice, promote their enthusiasm to investigate and explore. Staff document children's progress and achievements in the child's photographic record, ensuring that individuality is recognised and all children make excellent progress.
- 6.3 The parental questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive and in discussions with inspectors during the inspection, parents were highly appreciative of the education their children receive and of the continuous support provide by staff to help the youngest children settle in. Parents are kept comprehensively informed about their children's progress verbally, through the daily sheets or home books, written reports and through their child's photographic portfolio.

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

- 6.4 The contribution of the early years provision to the children's well-being is outstanding. Very caring and committed staff help all children, including those who need additional support, to form appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with their key person and other staff. From the youngest age, children are confident to communicate and play with adults and children alike. Staff give clear guidance on standards of courtesy and behaviour expected, so that children demonstrate exemplary levels of behaviour. From a young age children respect and care for one another and co-operate together, as seen when children built domino relays, constructed roadways and participated in a sorting activity. Staff conscientiously support independence, both in the children's own personal hygiene, table manners and daily routines, and in their learning.
- 6.5 The setting encourages good eating habits by providing healthy meals and snacks. Older children know about the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables. Children clean their teeth after lunch which further enhances their well-being. Outdoor equipment provides challenging opportunities for taking controlled risks. Children have further opportunities for physical exercise during their outdoor play in the well-equipped school grounds as well as in the specialist physical education lessons, and

swimming for the older children. The youngest children are taken regularly for interesting walks around the local environment.

- 6.6 Links with the main school through sharing specialist teaching, joining assemblies, participating in transit mornings and through planned liaison with Year 1 staff, ensure that children are well-prepared for transition into the next stage of their learning.

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

- 6.7 The leadership and management of the early years provision is good. Governance provides a good oversight of the EYFS. Procedures and effective policies, with thorough risk assessments, ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met so that the setting is a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. All staff are qualified and appropriately checked and trained in child protection. Productive partnerships have been developed with external agencies. Staff receive first aid training including paediatric first aid training, and appropriate health and safety measures are fully implemented. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements of the EYFS.
- 6.8 Leaders from both the Nursery and Reception meet weekly to discuss practice. These regular meetings provide opportunities for staff to discuss children's development and well-being and improve the staff's professional development. Staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills through training needs identified through the appraisal system.
- 6.9 Appropriate systems for monitoring the educational programmes and for self-evaluation inform the setting's priorities and set targets for continuous improvement as part of the school development plan. The monitoring of assessments and planning of the next steps for individual children is not as consistently applied.
- 6.10 The setting successfully works in partnership with parents to enhance the learning and progress of each child, seeking appropriate interventions to support learning where needed.

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

- 6.11 The overall quality and standards of the setting are outstanding.
- 6.12 Overall the children, including those requiring additional support, make outstanding progress. The youngest children are introduced to books and counting, using songs and rhymes. In the Nursery classes, older children learn their initial sounds as they acquire early reading and writing skills. They learn to recognise shapes, patterns, count to 10 and organise data into bar graphs. By the end of the EYFS, most can order numbers beyond 20 and write simple sentences. Most children achieve the Early Learning goals and are working beyond these. The children express themselves creatively through their art, printing and mixing colours, creating summer flowers and three-dimensional spiders' webs and through the specialist music lessons across the setting. The oldest children use computers with assurance as was exemplified by the Reception children using a basic programme to draw a mini-beast garden. Learning about mini-beasts, growing beans, being introduced to farm animals and discovering the five senses, help children to learn about the wider world. Older children successfully learn French with a specialist teacher.
- 6.13 The children's personal development is outstanding. Children are safeguarded extremely effectively, cared for exceptionally well and their needs are fully met.

They enjoy coming to school and from the youngest children onwards, they happily share resources, take turns and are able to make independent choices about their play and behaviour in a setting where they feel safe and secure.

- 6.14 Following recommendations at the previous inspection, the timetable for senior managers in the EYFS provides sufficient time for responsibilities to be carried out. The short-term planning of individual children's next steps for learning has been established but is not consistently applied across the setting. A development plan for the EYFS has been incorporated into the school plan. The response to the findings of the previous report together with the ongoing self-evaluation of provision, is evidence of the setting's commitment to continuous improvement.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.15 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.