



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
SPRING GROVE SCHOOL**

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## Spring Grove School

Full Name of School	<b>Spring Grove School</b>
DfE Number	<b>886/6045</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY341255</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1099823</b>
Address	<b>Spring Grove School Harville Road Wye Ashford Kent TN25 5EZ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01233 812337</b>
Email Address	<b>office@springgroveschool.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Bill Jones</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Hugo Fenwick</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>207</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (99 boys; 108 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 18    5-11: 116 3-5 (EYFS): 73</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Carol Clarke</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>09 Jun 2015 to 12 Jun 2015</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The last full inspection was by Ofsted in 2009. The previous ISI inspection of the Early Years Foundation Stage was in May 2012. This is the first full inspection of the school by ISI.

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](http://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 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 Serena Alexander	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Tracey Handford	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathryn Stokes	Team Inspector (Head of Junior School, ISA school)
Mrs Eithne Webster	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>14</b>
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	14
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	14
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	15
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	15

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Spring Grove School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged from two to eleven years. It is situated in the village of Wye in Kent and is set in fourteen acres of land. The school was founded in 1967 by a local family. In 2003, a group of parents purchased the school and set it up as a charitable trust. The school is now administered by a board of governors. The main school is housed in a Georgian mansion built in 1674, with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) based in a separate building with its own outdoor areas. Facilities include a school hall and a purpose-built science block. A new music faculty was opened in 2014, including a multi-purpose performance space and practice rooms. The school has recently expanded its outdoor provision through the use of a neighbouring field.
- 1.2 The school seeks to provide a family atmosphere in which it encourages pupils to develop to their full potential academically, socially, physically and emotionally in a supportive, caring and friendly community. It aims to give pupils a thirst for knowledge and a strong sense of well-being, and for them to show consideration for others. It sets out for all to be encouraged by the school motto: 'Always do your best'.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. At the time of the inspection, there were 207 pupils on roll, of whom 91 were in the EYFS, 39 in Years 1 and 2, and 77 in Years 3 to 6, known as the Prep. The school identifies 14 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to whom it provides specialist help. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language (EAL) but who no longer requires language support. The pupils are drawn from the urban and rural communities around Ashford and Canterbury in Kent. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, and a small number represent minority ethnic groups.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The school refers to its youngest Nursery group as Teddies.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The achievement of the pupils is excellent and successfully fulfils the school's aims. The pupils' attitudes to learning across the whole school, including the EYFS, are outstanding. They are very well supported by good teaching, although the marking of their work is of a variable standard. Pupils successfully gain entry into selective maintained and independent schools, and several are awarded scholarships. They benefit from a curriculum that extends beyond its strong focus on literacy and numeracy and includes specialist teaching for pupils from a young age in French. Music and sport feature prominently and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities is on offer, with much use being made of the surrounding grounds. In response to a previous inspection recommendation, assessment is effectively used to provide information to parents but not always employed to the best effect in daily planning. Pupils with SEND are identified and receive valuable support. Pupils that are more able receive some degree of challenge but this is not consistent across the curriculum and in all age groups, including the EYFS. Since the previous full inspection and in line with the recommendations made at that time, learning is reviewed at the end of lessons, and following investment in resources pupils of all ages are proficient in their use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. At all ages, pupils are focused, compassionate and courteous. They care for each other and for the wider community, demonstrating a high level of emotional maturity. Pupils have a thoughtful and perceptive awareness of fundamental British values of equality and tolerance. They are appreciative of the excellent quality of pastoral care and talk warmly of the support and guidance they receive from their teachers. Comprehensive health and safety measures are in place throughout the school and premises are maintained to a good standard. Procedures for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are in place; recruitment procedures are thorough and are now recorded correctly, meeting the requirement of the previous inspection.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management is good. Governors provide effective oversight of the school, enabling its successful development. They undertake their statutory annual review of safeguarding but have not always referenced this to current statutory guidance. Clear pastoral and academic direction is provided for the whole school by management, under strong leadership. Leadership of the EYFS ensures that the youngest children enjoy their learning in a safe, welcoming and stimulating setting. Parents report positively on almost all aspects of their relationship with the school and excellent links with them are maintained.

## **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) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that governors monitor the review of policies and procedures so that compliance is maintained as regulatory requirements are updated.
  2. Utilise the results of assessments across the whole school, including the EYFS, to inform teachers' planning so that the needs of individuals are met, including extension and challenge for the more able.
  3. Monitor the implementation of the marking policy in order that pupils are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.

### **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 accordance with the school's aims, pupils throughout the school are well educated and work successfully towards achieving their full potential, both in their academic studies and in their extra-curricular pursuits. Pupils demonstrate strong literacy skills including speaking, listening and writing. They read very fluently for their ages and their presentation is excellent. Their mathematical and numerical skills are well developed and they successfully use these in problem solving. Pupils apply their considerable scientific knowledge with confidence. From a young age, they demonstrate very proficient knowledge and skills in ICT. Pupils are imaginative in their creative work, enjoying and achieving highly in all their practical and physical activities.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve a high standard of success in extra-curricular activities. They have an excellent record of success in their sporting pursuits, especially in cross country and athletics, often reaching national competition level. Pupils achieve considerable grades in music and exceptional results in speech and drama examinations. Their talents are demonstrated in the many productions staged by the school, including the recent musical *Ye Ha* and a wide range of informal concerts featuring soloists, for example, at a grandparents' day. Prep pupils successfully write their own musical compositions.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available from lesson observations, pupil interviews, written work in their books and results of standardised tests, it is judged to be high in relation to national aged-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils of all abilities make at least good progress overall and excellent progress in Years 4 to 6, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The good progress made by pupils with SEND or EAL is supported by individual education plans that inform teachers' planning and by specialist teachers and assistant staff in the classroom. Throughout the school the more able pupils demonstrate rapid progress overall in a number of subjects, both in classroom work observed and in the work scrutinised during the inspection. However, in some subject areas, additional challenge and opportunities to extend their learning are limited. During interviews and in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses all pupils said that they were pleased with the progress they were making. Almost all parents also expressed very positive views in response in their pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 3.5 When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they successfully gain entry into their chosen schools, including local selective maintained and independent schools. Several pupils each year are awarded academic, drama, music or sport scholarships. Pupils across the whole school exhibit outstanding attitudes to learning and show themselves to be enthusiastic participants in their lessons. They arrive at school cheerful and eager to begin their day. They are keen to explore and investigate, developing and sharing their own ideas with great confidence. Pupils are motivated to learn and readily engage when they find the work interesting and challenging. They are keen to participate in practical and collaborative tasks. The pupils are co-operative learners and enjoy working both independently and in groups, where they willingly share and support each other.

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

- 3.6 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, pupils benefit from the successful delivery of a broad curriculum that reflects their wide range of interests and has a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to read aloud and to focus on their presentation. In addition to the full range of National Curriculum subjects, all pupils study French, which, in addition to physical education and music, is taught by specialists. From Year 3, science, art, ICT and sports are also taught by specialists. Pupils have some timetabled sessions in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) though this is primarily delivered effectively in a variety of subjects, in assemblies and through personal mentoring by staff. Topical issues such as the General Election are covered with a balanced presentation of opposing views. Sport and music make very significant contributions both to the curriculum and to the range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- 3.8 Strong provision is made for pupils with SEND. Helpful information is available for teaching staff and individual education plans are in place when necessary. More able pupils are provided with additional challenges in the creative subjects and at times elsewhere, but this is not consistent. Planning is effective for all ages and schemes of work are updated regularly.
- 3.9 An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is on offer before and after school and at lunchtimes. As well as the coaching of school teams pupils have many sporting opportunities, including athletics at a local sports centre. This contributes greatly to pupils' success in track and field events. Musical opportunities include a wind band and a ceilidh band, as well as an orchestra. Pupils have many other options to choose from, such as ICT, gardening, dance and chess. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a very large majority of pupils and parents expressed their satisfaction with the range of experiences available.
- 3.10 The curriculum is positively supported by links with the local community. Since the opening of the new music facility, pupils now have the opportunity to sing with local choirs and are due to perform in a new community opera at the Stour Music Festival near Wye. Pupils visit a local home for the elderly at Harvest Festival. Older pupils sing carols in Canterbury. The school holds its Easter and Christmas services in a local parish church and pupils have won a High Sherriff award for tidying the graves on its site in preparation for Remembrance Day. The school also hosts a local fun run. The curriculum is further enhanced by a programme of educational trips to places of interest such as Dover Castle, the Turner gallery and Canterbury Cathedral. Older pupils recently visited the Imperial War Museum and the Churchill War Rooms to celebrate the VE Day anniversary. Residential trips to France for Year 5 and to Wales for Year 6 broaden the pupils' educational experience. Members of the local community also contribute to the pupils' learning where appropriate, such as the provision of update on an African schools charity for which the pupils raise money, a parent discussing Islam with Year 6 and a local farmer talking to Year 1 pupils about farming.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.11 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.12 Teaching promotes pupils' progress and, through high expectations, fully supports the school motto: 'Always do your best'. The most successful teaching is characterised by clear learning objectives, good subject knowledge and planning that is based on an understanding of the pupils' needs. Effective teaching is also characterised by opportunities for pupils to develop their own learning and to work independently, as seen in Years 5 and 6 creative and extended writing projects. Opportunities for independent learning were also observed in science, where pupils met challenges that enabled them to progress their own interests and knowledge. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons that offer a broad variety of activities and discussion, such as an English lesson on World War I poetry and a history lesson exploring the emotions and experiences of refugees. In all lessons, teaching promotes tolerance and respect for others. In the few lessons observed where teaching is less successful, opportunities for pupils to participate and show their ability are limited and the approach is less varied, with a tendency to be overly led by the teacher. As a result, the pupils' interest is less engaged. In addition, in many lessons, the same task is set for the whole class, regardless of pupils' differing ability. Although individual pupils receive help as required, their needs are not always met most efficiently. Opportunities for plenary sessions are undertaken when time allows, meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.13 There are a few opportunities for formal collaborative work; when offered, these foster a high level of enjoyment and enable pupils to be actively involved in assisting each other's learning. Behaviour management in the classroom and throughout the school is of a high standard, reflecting the mutual respect that is evident between pupils and teachers.
- 3.14 In response to the pre inspection questionnaire, many pupils expressed the view that homework does not help them to learn. Inspectors spoke with pupils during interviews and found no evidence to support this view. Homework was found to be valuable, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where it prepares pupils for their senior school examinations.
- 3.15 A marking policy is in place and pupils' work is marked regularly. The most effective marking is thorough and includes helpful comments, indicating how pupils can improve, but this practice is not consistent across all subject areas and age groups. A comprehensive assessment system effectively tracks pupils' progress. However, this does not yet inform teachers' daily planning to ensure that the set tasks meet pupils' individual needs, particularly in providing suitable extension and challenge for the most able. The school is working towards offering more extended opportunities to fully challenge these pupils; some examples of this were observed, but this is not yet fully embedded in all lessons. Therefore, the previous inspection recommendation has only partially been met.
- 3.16 The teaching of pupils with SEND is successful in meeting their needs, both within the classroom and in the extra sessions organised for them. Across the school, specialist staff and teaching assistants provide valuable help to those who need individual support. Any pupils with a statement of special educational needs are treated with great care, and they and their parents receive considerable support.

- 3.17 Most classrooms provide stimulating learning environments. Teachers use resources effectively. Interactive whiteboards feature prominently and, where these are used imaginatively, for example in French, pupils are particularly engaged in their learning. High quality displays of pupils' work in corridor areas throughout the school promote pupils' sense of pride.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal qualities are extremely well developed for their age, and the school thus successfully achieves its aims. Pupils are focused, compassionate and courteous, and have a highly developed shared sense of responsibility. They care for each other and for the wider community. Pupils are self-aware and self-confident, demonstrating a high level of emotional maturity. By the time the pupils leave the school, their personal development is high, achieved through effective support and guidance.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. They frequently reflect on their own lives and their place and impact on the world as they consider the messages delivered in the extensive assembly programme. They enjoy the many, varied opportunities for collective singing and embrace the broad Christian ethos. Pupils admire and respond to the natural world in the numerous opportunities offered. They show an appreciation of non-material aspects of life through the rich and diverse music programme, and the many opportunities to create and reflect on the high quality art and other stimulating displays.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is strong. They show a well-developed sense of right and wrong, when, for example, discussing the awarding of sanctions. Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour; they act kindly towards each other and strong co-operation and mutual support are seen in lessons and at play. The school rules have been drawn up by the pupils and are respected by them. Pupils embrace the strong moral code, with emphasis on kindness and truth, promoted in assemblies and in the curriculum; for example, in English, they discussed the moral messages found in traditional fables.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development and awareness are excellent. They have a true sense of community, which is encapsulated in the recently written, performed and filmed school song. They work hard to achieve 'stars' and contribute to the success of their house. In assemblies, they celebrate with genuine enthusiasm the numerous individual achievements gained by their peers both in school and through other personal endeavours. Pupils have a variety of opportunities to take on responsibility. In the Prep, the pupils each have an opportunity to be a 'VIP' and they take seriously the responsibility for organising the clearing of their table at lunch, as well as leading the class line. Year 6 pupils enthusiastically embrace further numerous opportunities for responsibility, including the appointment of charity prefects who take an effective lead in organising the many fund-raising events held.
- 4.6 Through the curriculum, pupils successfully develop an understanding of other faiths and cultures. An ethos of mutual respect and understanding of others is firmly embedded across the school community. Pupils deepen their knowledge of their own and other Western cultures through numerous local visits, strong links with their community and a well-established residential trip to France. They support an African schools project and learn how their many fund-raising efforts benefit those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.7 The pupils have a thoughtful and perceptive awareness of fundamental British values of equality and tolerance; they see themselves as all friends with each other,

particularly notable across the genders. The school is committed to promoting a democratic process through the election of school council members. Knowledge of institutions and services in England is achieved through, for example, a visiting barrister give a talk about the law and children in Reception visiting the lifeboat station at Dungeness.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff provide highly effective support and guidance, successfully fulfilling the school's aims. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of pupils and parents expressed great satisfaction with the school's provision of pastoral care. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils are highly supportive of each other. All staff are committed to meeting the individual pastoral needs of the pupils and these are discussed regularly in staff meetings.
- 4.10 Pupils learn of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through assemblies. They are encouraged to bring in healthy options for their break time snack. A limited hot lunch is provided, and pupils have expressed their opinion that the menu does not offer a range of healthy choices. They make full use of the many opportunities for physical activity and exercise within the curriculum and the extensive extra-curricular programme.
- 4.11 Good behaviour is effectively promoted through the system of rewards and sanctions, and the pupils speak with pride about receiving headmaster's certificates in assembly. Detailed records of behaviour are kept and these allow any overall patterns to be identified. A few pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that sanctions are not awarded fairly, and in responses to their questionnaire some parents were concerned about behaviour. From observations, pupil interviews and scrutiny of records, inspection found no evidence to support these views. Pupils are very well behaved, and sanctions, when given, are appropriate. The school has established a positive ethos where pupils readily recognise that bullying or harassment of any kind are unacceptable. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few pupils and a small minority of parents indicated that they felt the school does not deal well with bullying. In interviews pupils were clear that bullying is not an issue and all confidently knew who to talk to if they have concerns. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils did not agree that the school asks for their opinions or responds to them. From inspectors' observations and interviews with pupils, there was no evidence to support this view; pupils feel that their views are actively sought. The school council, made up from elected pupil representatives from Years 1 to 6, meets regularly and pupils spoke with great pride of the areas of school life to which they have contributed, such as the introduction of a zip wire.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.14 Comprehensive health and safety measures are in place throughout the school and are now monitored by a health and safety committee. Premises are maintained to a good standard. The requirement of the 2009 inspection for provision of hot water in hand basins has been met. Risk assessments for the site and for visits out of school are thorough and regularly reviewed under the school's recently revised risk assessment policy, which now includes more involvement by teaching staff. Meticulous records are maintained of all checks on equipment and these are undertaken regularly. Comprehensive fire prevention and safety policies are implemented effectively and a fire risk assessment is undertaken annually. Fire drills for the whole school take place at least termly and any identified shortcomings are rectified.
- 4.15 Throughout the school, procedures for safeguarding pupils are understood and policies now follow the recently updated guidance. There is a clear code of conduct for staff and pupils are educated on keeping themselves safe, including sensible use of the internet. Carefully kept records show that designated staff receive suitable safeguarding training from the local authority and all staff receive child protection training regularly. All new staff and volunteers receive induction training that includes safeguarding. Recruitment procedures are thorough and the necessary pre-recruitment checks are undertaken on all new staff, volunteers and governors. However, these have not always been suitably recorded. By the end of the inspection, the school's central record of appointments was completed correctly.
- 4.16 The school has a detailed first-aid policy, and an appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid and paediatric first aid. Suitable facilities are available for those pupils who are unwell or have SEND. Staff are kept well informed about pupils with various medical conditions. All accidents or injuries are recorded and parents are duly notified. The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governors provide effective oversight of the school through a wide range of professional expertise, including relevant educational experience. Several are parents of former or current pupils and have personal experience of the school. Since taking over the school in 2003 governors have demonstrated successful financial planning, enabling the school to develop in order to fulfil its aims. As well as suitable investment in teaching accommodation and staff, the school is well maintained and academic departments are fully resourced.
- 5.3 Governors have a good insight into the working of the school, with many in regular attendance. In addition to their committee duties, many governors also attend special events and some visit classes and observe lessons. A named governor for safeguarding works very closely with the school and provides a ready source of advice. The full governing body has undertaken its statutory annual review of the safeguarding policy, following a comprehensive scrutiny of the school's procedures and practice. Following the requirement of the 2012 inspection, governors have ensured that suitable recruitment procedures were in place but not that these have always been recorded correctly.
- 5.4 Recently established sub-committees now monitor educational provision and the arrangements for health and safety, and have now considered the implications of current regulatory requirements, although they have not always ensured that the necessary changes are implemented promptly. They provide appropriate support and challenge to the school, including the EYFS, through a named governor. An ambitious school development plan includes future considerations for the provision of both material and educational improvement. Effective appraisal systems are in place for senior staff.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 Management provides strong pastoral and academic direction, and fully supports the aims of the school. Under strong leadership, management closely monitors academic performance and, within the ethos of the school, encourages pupils to respect others and to value the democratic process. Provision for the oldest pupils has a focus on preparation for senior school education, including the local authority test that governs entry to selective maintained schools, and has proved very successful. Senior management knows pupils well and works hard to ensure that their pastoral needs are met fully. Pupils speak warmly of the individual support, guidance and, at times, educational challenge, they receive.
- 5.7 Further to previous inspection recommendations, lessons are well structured and end with a review when time allows; the comprehensive assessment system is effectively used to inform parents but does not yet guide teachers' daily planning to ensure that a variety of tasks is set to meet the needs of individual pupils. The

recommendations for the EYFS to continue the process of self-evaluation and to introduce more resources have been fully met.

- 5.8 Leadership and management diligently discharge their delegated responsibilities for educational provision. Academic policies are reviewed regularly and have recently been carefully updated, following changes nationally. Regulatory policies are also updated but have not always reflected current regulations and guidance. Although procedures for health and safety and for the safeguarding of children are rigorous, staff have not always been aware of risk assessments, nor have recruitment checks on staff always been correctly recorded. These procedures have recently been reviewed and are now effective. All staff know the designated child protection co-ordinator and are appropriately trained. E-safety has been a recent focus for all staff and pupils. New staff are appointed with due consideration of their ability to engage with pupils at the school. They undertake an induction programme that includes safeguarding and health and safety.
- 5.9 A comprehensive appraisal system is in place and most staff are observed and appraised annually. The process includes self-assessment that informs the continuing professional development of staff. From the findings of a school parental questionnaire and discussions with staff, the annual short-term development plan effectively targets immediate areas for improvement. Leadership and management continually monitor the effectiveness of these. Reports to governors are detailed and thorough, reflecting the thoughtful and dedicated involvement of leadership in all areas of the school.
- 5.10 The school maintains excellent links with parents. From parents of those in the EYFS onwards, responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires showed an extremely high level of satisfaction with the educational progress of their children, their happiness and the care they receive. Parents also appreciate the leadership of the school, the curriculum provision, and the quality, speed and informative nature of communications with the school. A very small minority of parents did not feel that parents' concerns have been handled well. Inspectors examined records, looked at policies and held discussions with staff and pupils. They found that parents' concerns are taken seriously, with great efforts being made to respond to any issues that parents raise.
- 5.11 All members of pupils' families are warmly welcomed into the community of the school, and constructive relationships are established as soon as a pupil joins. A programme of performances, such as a grandparents' concert, nativity plays and carol concerts, allows parents to appreciate and celebrate their children's achievements. A weekly parents' assembly is well attended and provides good opportunities for parents to share the pupils' experience. That held during the inspection involved Year 5 pupils showing the video they had made on their French trip and performing *The Three Little Pigs* entirely in French, much enjoyed by the rest of the school and parents.
- 5.12 The lively Parent Teacher Association contributes greatly to the school through organising a wide variety of social, charity and other events, such as the summer ball, the refreshment tent at sports day, and uniform and cake sales. The enjoyable social occasions also raise funds both for external charities and to benefit the pupils at school, for example the provision of benches to aid them when putting on Wellington boots. Many parents provide further support for the school by playing alongside pupils in the orchestra or sharing their expertise with pupils in clubs and other extra-curricular activities.

- 5.13 The school ensures that all the required information is made available to the parents of current and prospective pupils. From the EYFS onwards, helpful, detailed reports provide an excellent summary of the pupils' progress, attainment and targets. These, together with a system of consultation evenings, allow parents to gain a good understanding of their children's educational progress and development, and helpful guidance is given. An effective text messaging system is used to distribute information such as changes in arrangements, while a breakfast club and after-school care demonstrate consideration of families' needs, a significant feature of the school. Almost all parents expressed in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they would recommend the school to others.

**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 at meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Committed and enthusiastic staff provide a variety of engaging activities to support the areas of learning, enabling most children to reach the expected levels of development. For any children whose development is delayed, effective intervention, guided by professional expertise, is rapidly introduced so that children receive the support they need to enable them to progress.
- 6.2 Throughout the EYFS, effective strategies and deep understanding of the needs and strengths of individual children ensure that all are equipped with the skills to learn and are prepared for the next stage of their school life. For children under the age of three, stories and imaginative play, such as in the 'pizzeria', extend their thinking and experiences. For those between three and five the effective teaching of phonics initiates the development of literacy; although on occasion tasks provided for the most able children lack sufficient challenge.
- 6.3 All adults have warm, supportive relationships with the children in their care. They know the children and their families extremely well, and make great efforts to ensure that children are happy and settled and that their parents are similarly assured. They share the day's activities and achievements through parent boards, contact books and learning records. Progress is discussed and described through detailed reports, parents' evenings, EYFS Profiles and, for the youngest children, the progress check at the age of two. Parents' responses to the questionnaire indicated overwhelming support for the setting's provision.

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

- 6.4 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is outstanding. The children are supported by warm relationships with all adults, particularly their key people, and develop the familiarity and confidence to explore, learn and progress. They behave extremely well, learn to share, and show evident happiness and enjoyment in the setting. Most are confident when talking and show a sociable interest in engaging with visitors.
- 6.5 The children are extremely well looked after. For those under the age of three who are not yet able to manage their own hygiene needs, care is rapid and sensitive, while children between three and five are fully supported to develop independence in this area. They understand the need for hand washing and are beginning to learn the importance of physical exercise. Reception children develop new skills such as swimming, while the younger children are able to practise accurate bean bag throwing and the experience the exhilaration of flying a kite in the attractive and inspiring outdoor areas.
- 6.6 Water is freely available and although the children bring in their own break time snacks they are encouraged to be healthy, with careful attention paid to the possibility of others' allergies. Lunch is eaten in the hall, where children become accustomed to seeing other staff and older pupils, so preparing them for the next

stage of their education. The proximity of the EYFS rooms and the shared play areas develop the children's knowledge of other adults in the school and thus their confidence in moving on. Visits to their new rooms or new schools prior to entry also increase the children's sense of assurance.

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

- 6.7 The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Strong leadership and management of the setting ensure that all aspects of its educational programmes are implemented and provision extends beyond the requirements through the teaching of French and ballet. Governance effectively supports the work of the EYFS and a governor has specific oversight of the setting.
- 6.8 In response to a previous inspection recommendation, planning now includes desired EYFS outcomes, with links between outdoor and indoor activities. There has also been investment in resources to promote the teaching and learning of ICT. However, planning in the specific areas of learning for more able older children does not always include tasks and activities that challenge and extend their learning.
- 6.9 The welfare requirements of the EYFS are effectively implemented so that the children are able to learn in a safe, welcoming and stimulating setting. All staff are trained in the safeguarding of children and a suitable number are trained in paediatric first aid. By the end of the inspection, all required information was correctly entered on the single central register of appointments, including discretionary checks, thus meeting the requirement of the previous inspection.
- 6.10 The early years provision is carefully evaluated and developmental needs identified. Staff are encouraged to further their professional development through external courses, as well as having regular appraisal and supervision, so that understanding and practice are constantly developing. Extremely productive partnerships with parents ensure that they are well supported in assisting their children's progress. In cases of identified need, the school is effective at following the recommendations and guidance of professionals, so that progress is rapid.

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

- 6.11 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are good. Children are lively learners in both teacher-directed activities and those they initiate themselves. Good standards were observed in all subjects. Children under the age of three were able to use comparative language when describing animals in an enjoyable and interesting game, while older children have begun to recognise and order numbers. Reception children can read books appropriate for their age, including recognising frequently used irregular words, and can complete simple addition and subtraction. Effective support from teaching assistants enables all children, including those with SEND, to make excellent progress relative to their starting points. Children's independence and understanding of risk are effectively developed as they choose freely from the activities available both inside and in the safe and exciting outdoor learning areas.
- 6.12 Children feel secure and happy, and speak with affection of the adults in school as well as their friends. They feel sure that the teachers care for them and will look after them. From the youngest age, children know the routines of the day and are beginning to respond to these, such as knowing that the bell ringing in the garden signals the beginning of classroom time.

- 6.13 The leadership and management of the early years are dedicated to continuous evaluation of the provision in order to improve the experience for the children. They are very aware of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS, and are committed to providing safe and stimulating experiences for the children in their care.

**Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.14 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.**