



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**AVON HOUSE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Avon House School

|                        |   |            |                  |
|------------------------|---|------------|------------------|
| Full Name of School    | <b>Avon House School</b>  |            |                  |
| DfE Number             | <b>317/6059</b>   |            |                  |
| Address                | <b>Avon House School<br/>490 High Road<br/>Woodford Green<br/>Essex<br/>IG8 0PN</b> |            |                  |
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| Head                   | <b>Mrs Amanda Campbell</b>  |            |                  |
| Chair of Governors     | <b>Mr David Malyon</b>  |            |                  |
| Age Range              | <b>3 to 11</b>  |            |                  |
| Total Number of Pupils | <b>188</b>  |            |                  |
| Gender of Pupils       | <b>Mixed (102 boys; 86 girls)</b>   |            |                  |
| Numbers by Age         | 3-5 (EYFS):   | <b>47</b>  | 5-11: <b>141</b> |
| Number of Day Pupils   | Total:  | <b>188</b> |                  |
| Head of EYFS Setting   | <b>Mrs May Abery</b>  |            |                  |
| EYFS Gender            | <b>Mixed</b>  |            |                  |
| Inspection Dates       | <b>06 May 2014 to 09 May 2014</b>   |            |                  |

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous inspection was carried out by Ofsted in October 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (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](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.

## **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' representatives, including the chair, and with the proprietor. They 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**

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Mr David Edwards

Mr Christopher Emmott

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS/ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Avon House Preparatory School is a day school for girls and boys situated in Woodford Green in Essex. The school is a proprietorial school owned by Avon House Ltd, which is a trust. It was purchased in 1969 by Sheila Ferrari who is the principal, and manages the Sheila Ferrari Dyslexia Centre on the same site. The centre does not form part of this inspection. The school has a board of directors who oversee financial and legal matters, and a recently-appointed board of governors whose role is to support senior staff in directing the school's work.
- 1.2 The school aims to celebrate and support every child, building self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others in a caring environment. A particular emphasis is placed on recognising the needs of each individual child and working closely with parents and carers.
- 1.3 The school educates girls and boys from three to eleven years, offering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. Since the previous inspection by Ofsted in 2009, the school has become part of the Independent Schools Association and a new leadership team was appointed in 2011. The school library and staff room have been relocated, and an art room, a changing room for pupils and a waiting area for parents have been introduced.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 188 pupils on roll, of whom 47 were in the EYFS. The school does not select by ability and does not carry out standardised tests to assess ability. The school's tracking data indicates that pupils' ability is generally average to above the national average. Pupils come from mainly professional backgrounds, and a large proportion is from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian.
- 1.5 Thirty-one pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), although none of these pupils require support. Forty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and thirty-four receive additional support from the school. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

| School       | NC name   |
|--------------|-----------|
| Foundation 1 | Nursery   |
| Foundation 2 | Reception |

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

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

- 2.1 Avon House School is successful in meeting its aims of providing a secure, happy, caring and respectful environment where a differentiated curriculum ensures the needs of every pupil are met. Pupils achieve well and make good progress through the school, reaching above average standards of attainment and developing very positive attitudes to learning. They benefit from a good curriculum and an excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities. Throughout the school, pupils have insufficient opportunities within the curriculum to use information and communications technology (ICT). Teaching is good overall, with examples of excellent practice, but also with some inconsistencies in its effectiveness. Children's achievement in the EYFS is excellent due to the excellent provision for their learning and well-being.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are proud of, and loyal to their school, and get on very well with one another and with adults. They are extremely tolerant, and interested in those who are different from themselves, so that racial harmony within the school is strong. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility within the school and to make their contribution to the wider community through charity fundraising. The excellent quality of pastoral care in the school and the attention given to welfare, health and safety mean pupils are able to thrive in supportive and secure surroundings where they are recognised as valued individuals.
- 2.3 The school is well governed. Those with responsibility for governance have ensured that the school is fully compliant with legal requirements. The newly formed board of governors is developing its role well, and beginning to provide helpful support and challenge to senior leaders. Leadership and management of the school are good, giving a positive direction to the school and setting ambitious targets for improvement. School development planning is not yet sufficiently streamlined to make immediate priorities clear. The EYFS is extremely well run, but a lack of outdoor storage space means access to some resources is limited. Parents are very happy with the school and what it offers their children, although some would like more information on the progress their children are making. They are very supportive of the school and welcome the way in which the school involves them in its life and in their children's learning.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure ICT is fully covered in curriculum provision across the school, including the EYFS.
2. Share the school's best practice in teaching to ensure that lessons always have high expectations and sufficient challenge and pupil involvement.
3. Review the processes for school development planning to ensure that the next steps in the school's improvement are clearly identified.
4. In the EYFS, review the outdoor storage facilities for resources to enable children to have free access to the playhouse.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school aims to enable pupils to develop their full potential in both academic and non-academic fields. In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress in their learning relative to their ability and starting points. At the end of Reception, children achieve highly in relation to the Early Learning Goals, with a significant proportion exceeding them. All children across the setting make excellent progress in their language development. They use their knowledge of letters and letter sounds to support their reading and early writing skills.
- 3.3 Across the EYFS, children can confidently count up to 100, and can count in twos and tens, and backwards from 20; Reception children can make simple addition and subtraction sums using numbers up to 20. Children confidently use headphones and a compact disc player to listen to stories. However, during the inspection, little evidence was seen of the children accessing the interactive whiteboard or computers. Children enjoy initiating activities for themselves, such as deciding on the next role play area, and they persevere with activities for long periods, such as acting out the story of Goldilocks and the three bears.
- 3.4 From Year 1, pupils of all ages listen carefully in class and express their ideas thoughtfully and sensibly. They read confidently and fluently, and are able to write for a range of purposes, knowing what type of language to use in different situations. Their imagination and creativity is very evident in their high quality art and in their work in design technology. They have good basic linguistic skills in French. Pupils have good numeracy skills and are able to apply these to problem solving, and to investigations in science. They have sound ICT skills, though they do not always have regular opportunities to use these in school. Pupils enjoy being active, and apply themselves to their physical education (PE) lessons with great enthusiasm. Beyond the classroom, pupils achieve well in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available to them. There are many talented musicians who learn instruments, and pupils gain significant success in sport, including hockey, swimming, netball and cross-country running.
- 3.5 The attainment of pupils cannot be measured in relation to performance in national tests, but based on the work seen in lessons, interviews and in their books and the school's tracking data, their attainment is judged to be above average compared with national expectations for their age. Year 2 pupils regularly win places at highly competitive local schools, including scholarships, and Year 6 pupils often gain admission to their first choice of senior school. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Those with SEND or EAL similarly make good progress due to the support they receive in class and in specialist individual sessions. Improvements since the previous inspection in providing challenging work for more able pupils mean that they too make good progress.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to learning. They settle quickly in class, follow instructions and co-operate willingly with one another in their tasks. They take a pride in their work and present it neatly, and with care. They are keen to talk about what they are doing, and make every effort to complete it to the best of

their abilities. Pupils develop good work habits and bring enthusiasm and good humour to their lessons.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.8 An extensive review of the curriculum was in progress at the time of the inspection. Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum that addresses the needs of all abilities and is underpinned by detailed, cross-curricular planning. The curriculum meets the academic, pastoral and physical needs of all the pupils together with a strong creative element that complements the numeracy and literacy focus. Teachers work closely with the senior leadership team to devise stimulating provision that caters for the individual requirements of the pupils.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, the setting offers excellent provision which meets the needs of the children who attend exceptionally. The broad educational programmes give the children many opportunities to develop a range of skills, and express their ideas with confidence and enjoyment. Individual children's needs are fully recognised and supported well, and they are encouraged to initiate activities for themselves in all areas of learning.
- 3.10 ICT is not currently timetabled as a subject across the school, and has been identified by the school as an area for development. Plans for new investment and initiatives to increase opportunities across the whole school are in place.
- 3.11 Exciting and well-organised cross-curricular themed weeks are used to provide whole school curriculum celebrations. The extensive work generated throughout the Shakespeare Week, showed evidence of opportunities for in-depth analysis and the chance to produce engaging pieces of extended writing and creative artwork. Pupils develop a confidence in communication through literacy, performing arts, music and the opportunity to develop their opinions in the classroom.
- 3.12 Pupils' individual needs are sensitively met through a highly effective programme of support and monitoring. Similarly, the school has continued to develop provision for more able pupils, and observations confirmed that the curriculum provides both challenge and enjoyment for all abilities, particularly in numeracy and literacy. Pupils are able to learn French in class, and sample Greek and Spanish in clubs. An extensive programme of personal, social and health education contributes significantly to the excellent levels of pupils' behaviour and emotional well-being, and promotes their insight into global issues such as the provision of clean water.
- 3.13 The school has devised an excellent extra-curricular programme that extends the opportunities available to all the pupils in an imaginative and focused way. Whether it is gardening or Greek, 'brain training' or ballet, the pupils have a comprehensive array of balanced activities that enhance their school week. Pupils spoke with unbridled enthusiasm about school activities, and they value the commitment undertaken by the staff. The educational visits programme, which includes a varied selection of London landmarks and attractions, together with extensive use of the local environment, further broadens the pupils' experiences and stimulates their classroom follow-up activities. Residential activities which strengthen pupils' independence are organised from Year 2 upwards, including the opportunity to ski in Europe and a Year 6 trip to an activity and adventure centre.

- 3.14 Links with the local and wider community are well established at the school, and help to develop pupils' social awareness and their sense of responsibility towards others. The house system plays an important part in the life of the school and each house supports a chosen charity in line with school's commitment to promoting a value-driven education. Charity events included a sponsored walk in support of children with hearing impairments and a cycle ride to raise funds for an international water aid project.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 In the most effective lessons observed, pupils received clear and challenging learning objectives, worked at an appropriate pace and benefitted from timely interventions designed to both inform and reassure. The less effective lessons do not always promote high expectations nor provide an appropriate range of tasks to match pupils' abilities. Examples of excellent teaching were observed and a small proportion of teaching was sound. The best practice within the school is not always sufficiently shared with colleagues to provide a consistency of approach.
- 3.17 A particular strength of teaching throughout the school is the outstanding relationships that exist between staff and pupils. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of all the pupils, which promotes a learning environment that is built on trust and mutual respect. Pupils freely discuss their work and ideas without reservation or inhibition, displaying confidence and independence.
- 3.18 Teachers know their subjects well, and know how to generate interest and curiosity in their pupils. They organise their lessons well, allowing pupils plenty of time and opportunity to ask questions and carry out challenging tasks, which are then discussed and any misunderstandings clarified. Resources are relevant and well-used, particularly the interactive whiteboards, but there are limited opportunities for the pupils themselves to use ICT to support their learning and develop their skills.
- 3.19 Staff in the EYFS offer an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities which enable children to learn highly effectively, develop basic skills and respond to the high expectations of staff. In response to the previous inspection report, a covered outdoor area has been provided for the Nursery, and staff make the most of this to provide exciting activities for children, whatever the weather. Reception now has its own outdoor space, though this has not yet been covered over and this is full of interesting activities. Storage areas for large equipment are limited, and as a result children are not readily able to use the playhouse where this is stored without the help of staff.
- 3.20 The contribution from the special needs department plays a significant role in the progress and self-esteem of the pupils, ensuring that all abilities, including the more able, are provided for effectively. However, the deployment of teaching assistants is inconsistent, ranging from targeted interventions embedded in the planning to passive roles that prove limited in their impact upon teaching and learning.
- 3.21 Tracking of pupils' progress has been designed to plot pupils' attainment with respect to national expectations. The marking of the pupils' work is both consistent and informative. Pupils are fully aware of their targets and how to achieve them. They exchange informed comments with their teachers and use self-assessment to convey their level of understanding.

- 3.22 Assessment procedures in the EYFS have been improved as a result of the findings of the previous inspection. Baseline assessments have been introduced at the beginning and end of the EYFS in addition to the profiles. Ongoing assessments take place through regular observations, and systems for the evaluation of the data have been set up to assist in identifying individual needs and matching planned activities as closely as possible.
- 3.23 When interviewed, the pupils eloquently expressed their genuine appreciation of their teachers. They consistently referred to the support they received and their enjoyment of lessons and the extra-curricular timetable. The teaching reflects a detailed understanding of each pupil's needs and fosters a positive learning environment where the pupils feel cared for and valued.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school fulfils its aims of celebrating and supporting every child. The pupils are confident and self-aware and have high self-esteem, all qualities that are nurtured carefully by the teaching staff. Children in the EYFS are enthusiastic yet polite to their peers, and understand how to share, be kind and be safe. They respond well to praise and find learning fun. They are all happy to come to school and are very well prepared for moving on to their next class.
- 4.3 Pupils throughout the school appreciate the non-material aspects of life and are guided sensitively in this area by their teachers in lessons, activities, assemblies and clubs. Pupils genuinely appreciate the achievements of others, are tolerant of weaknesses, and are mature, polite and respectful in their dealings with adults. In pre-inspection questionnaires pupils who responded felt that teachers helped them learn.
- 4.4 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They understand the difference between right and wrong, and behave accordingly. A debate in a Year 5 religious education lesson on a moral dilemma illustrated the pupils' strong sense of morality. The pupils are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves, and are successful in raising considerable funds for a variety of charities in Britain and abroad. Pupils often suggest and choose which charities they wish to support, as well as the means of fund-raising.
- 4.5 There is plenty of opportunity for the pupils to accept positions of responsibility, such as class, house and sporting captains, and the pupils are proud of their roles. The school council, greatly valued by the pupils, is an extremely successful body and has contributed to much positive change within the school. In lessons and activities the pupils were seen to listen to one another and respect one another's views, even when they did not necessarily agree with them.
- 4.6 The school community is richly diverse in ethnicity, culture and religion, and the pupils have a highly developed awareness of and respect for their own and others' cultures and beliefs. Themed days, educational local visits and residential trips abroad, after-school clubs, celebrations of festivals and a programme of outside speakers are all enjoyed and appreciated by the pupils, further developing their excellent social awareness. Regular, successful and popular plays, such as the Year 3 and 4 production about Robin Hood which was performed during the inspection, concerts and vibrant displays around the school, deepen the pupils' sense of the importance of art, music and drama in their lives.
- 4.7 The pupils' personal development is further supported by a high quality PSHE programme. By the time they leave the school, the pupils' personal development is excellent.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school fulfils its aim of attributing the highest priority to pastoral care. The staff are courteous and polite in their dealings with the pupils, and the pupils reciprocate

similarly. Relationships across the school between pupils, and between pupils and adults are extremely strong, reflecting the caring nature of the school. All parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are happy with how the school looks after their children. Excellent policies on pastoral care are implemented successfully in practice.

- 4.10 All children in the EYFS have a key person to support them, and relationships between children and adults are excellent. Children feel safe and secure in the setting, confident to ask for help. The staff team are excellent role models, encouraging independence and co-operative play, so that children's behaviour is exemplary.
- 4.11 Highly effective systems of rewards and sanctions promote good behaviour, and almost all pupils believe that staff are fair in their use. The anti-bullying policy is detailed and effective, and appropriate systems are in place to deal with the very rare incidences of bullying. Pre-inspection questionnaires and discussions during the inspection highlighted that pupils are highly confident that any bad behaviour, however rare, is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- 4.12 The pupils enjoy the food the school offers and have a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating. Great emphasis is placed on the need for regular exercise, and the school make sure that all take part. Children in the EYFS understand from an early age that healthy eating is important. They eat fruit at break time and drink milk or water. The latter is freely available. EYFS children are taught about the need for physical exercise, and they take part in a 'take ten' warm-up session each morning. Staff teach them to keep safe and manage risk in the playground, and all manage their own personal hygiene independently.
- 4.13 The school listens to the views of the pupils and acts, where appropriate, upon their suggestions and opinions. The pupils believe they are listened to and are clearly proud of their school and all that it offers.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school's safeguarding arrangements, including the EYFS, are clear, strong and effective, and staff in all parts of the school receive regular child protection training. Those responsible for overseeing child protection have been trained to the required level. The school is aware of its new obligations under the Department for Education's new guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', and is addressing these accordingly. Arrangements for safe recruitment are thorough and appropriate.
- 4.16 The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place to reduce the risk of fire and accidents. Regular fire practices are held, records are kept appropriately and relevant equipment is checked at suitable intervals. The large and effective health and safety committee places the highest priority on keeping the school safe. Detailed risk assessments for school premises, activities and trips are in place, although the monitoring of these to ensure consistency does not always happen regularly. The school has appropriate arrangements for any pupils who are sick or injured, or who have particular medical or learning support needs. In response to the previous inspection report, several staff have been trained in paediatric first aid, including two in the EYFS, and one always accompanies school trips. Admission and attendance registers are completed and stored correctly.

- 4.17 The pre-inspection parental questionnaires indicated that all parents who responded believe their children are well cared for at school, and that they feel happy and safe.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The proprietor, trustees and governors have a good oversight of the running of the school and spend money prudently for the benefit and well-being of its pupils. They have made sure that the school is well-resourced and that the best possible use is made of its accommodation, although more investment in ICT is recognised as a priority. Very close attention is paid to regulatory requirements. All requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met, and governors ensure that a comprehensive annual review of safeguarding is carried out. There is a governor with specific responsibility for overseeing child protection. Governors have good oversight of the EYFS and intend to develop further links.
- 5.3 The proprietor and trustees have guided the school well for many years, enabling it to meet its aims of providing a secure, happy, caring and respectful environment where each child is recognised as a valued individual. Recent senior staff appointments have proved invaluable in helping the school to move forward and tackle the needs of changes in national educational policy and direction. The governing body, although new, provides a valuable additional layer of expertise and support for the school's leadership and staff. The governors are rapidly developing their role in challenging the school and holding it to account, although their part in school development planning is still at an early stage of involvement.

### **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, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.5 Leaders and managers are successful in ensuring that the school meets its aims of helping pupils to develop their self-esteem, respect for themselves and others, and their full potential in academic and non-academic fields. They create an environment where educational provision is good, pupils achieve well and flourish in their personal development because of the excellent pastoral care. Senior leaders have given close attention to making sure that the school complies fully with regulations, and that the school's policies are implemented effectively in practice. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and well structured, so that pupils are kept safe at all times. The school follows safer recruitment procedures assiduously and the central register of appointments is accurately maintained.
- 5.6 A detailed review of the school's senior management structure since the previous inspection has resulted in responsibility for the running of the school being devolved to a team of senior leaders. They are developing well in their roles. Subject leaders are also in place for most areas of the curriculum and take responsibility for producing action plans for their subjects. These vary in quality, though the best are focused on improving outcomes for pupils. The school development plan is over-lengthy and over-ambitious and it is difficult to identify immediate priorities. Many interesting new initiatives have been introduced, and management is well placed to establish, consolidate and evaluate these new ventures.

- 5.7 Excellent leadership in the EYFS has ensured that the setting has successfully addressed all the issues arising from the previous inspection and implemented new requirements fully. Staff are well qualified and have many opportunities for relevant professional development. They benefit from regular supervision by managers and meet frequently to plan, evaluate children's progress and discuss ideas for improving provision. Strong partnerships have been formed with external agencies to support children's individual needs.
- 5.8 The school's senior leaders are successful in creating a sense of team spirit and common purpose across the school, giving direction to staff at all levels and ensuring that everyone has the pupils' best interests at heart. The school has made good appointments of staff and gives them good opportunities for professional development through well-structured appraisal and training courses. Training for staff in safeguarding, first aid and health and safety is thorough, and enables them to meet the needs of pupils very effectively.
- 5.9 Links with parents are good. Throughout the school, parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were appreciative of many aspects of the school's provision. They are pleased with the high standards of behaviour, the fact that their children are happy and feel safe in a friendly environment, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities. A few parents felt that the pupils did not receive appropriate homework for their age. Inspection found that homework is generally appropriate for the age of pupils and effectively spread across the week. A few parents considered that the school did not handle their concerns well. Inspectors explored how concerns were dealt with and found they were appropriately handled and recorded.
- 5.10 A very small minority of parents were not satisfied with the information given about their child's progress. Inspectors examined the procedures for reporting progress and found effort grade cards sent out half-termly to be of limited use on their own. Reports are of a good quality containing details of pupils' attainment, progress and targets, though attainment levels are not clearly explained.
- 5.11 The school has an 'open door' policy; and the school's leadership is frequently available for any parents or carer should they have a concern. They are confident the staff know their individual children very well. Senior leaders have a high visual presence in the playground at the beginning and end of each day. In the EYFS, staff work closely with parents to ensure that children settle quickly and feel secure. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's learning, supporting reading at home, for example, helping with cookery sessions in school, or accompanying the children on local walks. Termly coffee mornings, to discuss topics requested by parents and attended by all EYFS staff, have proved very popular.
- 5.12 Half-termly newsletters keep parents up to date on events such as trips, awards, achievements and assemblies. New parents are provided with a range of information via the prospectus, comprehensive handbooks, open days and tours of the school. A range of useful material is available on the website, including regulatory information such as the complaints procedure and safeguarding policies. All required information is provided to parents and prospective parents.
- 5.13 Parents are provided with many opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school, including foundation cookery, French breakfast, the school swimming

gala and a sponsored charity walk. They are regularly invited to concerts, plays, and assemblies as well as helping with school events, for example, costumes for plays.

- 5.14 The recently formed parent-teacher association organises social and fundraising events for the school and charities. Funds have been raised for such items as soft play flooring for the EYFS, artificial turf for the gardening club area and floodlighting. The school values parents' support, and parents appreciate being part of the school community.

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