



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
PRENTON PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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Prenton Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Prenton Preparatory School
DfE Number	344/6005
EYFS Number	EY377118
Address	Prenton Preparatory School Mount Pleasant Oxton Birkenhead Merseyside CH43 5SY
Telephone Number	01516 523182
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Email Address	enquiry@prentonprep.co.uk
Head	Mr Michael Jones
Proprietors	Mr Michel and Mrs Noirin Aloé
Age Range	2½ to 11
Total Number of Pupils	110
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (53 boys; 57 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 68 3-5 (EYFS): 42
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 110
EYFS Co-ordinator	Miss Jane Orme
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	24 to 27 March 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2013.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

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Mrs Janet Cooper

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Prenton Preparatory is a proprietorial co-educational day school for pupils aged from two-and-a-half to eleven years. Founded in 1935, it is located in the residential area of Oxton, in the Wirral area of Merseyside. The current proprietors undertake the role of governance, along with responsibility for the financial management of the school.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide an all-round education that caters for the educational and emotional needs of its pupils in a caring, disciplined and stimulating environment. It believes that every child should be given the opportunity to achieve their true potential by providing a broad and balanced curriculum. By doing so, its pupils should become confident, polite, compassionate and tolerant individuals, ready for life in a multi-cultural society.
- 1.3 There are 110 pupils on roll: 57 girls and 53 boys. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) there are 42 children, some of whom attend part time; 33 of these receive Nursery funding. There were no children under the age of three at the time on the inspection. Four pupils receive support for English as an additional language (EAL). Ten pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and all receive extra learning support. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.4 The school building contains the main teaching area, including specialist teaching facilities for art, science and technology. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have recently been increased. The EYFS setting is located adjacent to the classrooms for the older pupils, and they share many facilities, including a large play area and the school grounds. The school makes use of nearby venues for sports provision, including swimming.
- 1.5 The results of standardised tests indicate that ability profile of the school is above the national average. Pupils generally come from the local area, and their parents from professional and business backgrounds. The diversity of the local population is reflected in a range of cultural backgrounds.
- 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 EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Pre-school	Nursery
Kindergarten	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is successful in meeting its aims. Parents are highly satisfied with the education provided for their children. The achievements of the pupils are excellent. Children in the EYFS almost all meet or exceed the expected levels of development for their age. Older pupils perform at excellent levels in National Curriculum tests, and are highly successful in gaining entry to selective senior schools. Outcomes for those with SEND and those who have statements of special educational need are notably strong. All pupils show outstanding positive attitudes towards their learning. Achievements in some extra-curricular activities are of high quality, notably in swimming, water polo and netball. Pupils of all ages benefit from a good curriculum, which provides them with a wide range of learning experiences. Curriculum planning and the role of subject co-ordinators have strengthened since the previous inspection. Teaching is good; teachers use a varied range of strategies to enthuse pupils, and lesson planning ensures the needs of all learners are usually met. A very small number of lessons do not follow the school's teaching policies, including meeting the needs of able pupils and the marking of pupil's work and, in the EYFS, some activities limit the promotion of individual learning.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils, and the pastoral care provided for them, are excellent. They show a strong spiritual and moral awareness, and their social skills are outstanding. They enjoy a good range of cultural experiences, and they are well prepared for their next stage of education and life in British society. Pupils in the EYFS are happy and confident, and feel an integral part of the wider school community. They form strong bonds with those who care for them. All pupils are extremely well behaved and the pastoral care provided for them is a significant strength of the school. The safeguarding policy had not been updated in line with changes to national requirements, though the necessary amendments were made before the start of the inspection. The procedures for their welfare, health and safety are sound; some aspects require strengthening in relation to monitoring risks on the school site and recording of recruitment checks.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is sound. The proprietors are well-known to many members of the community, and have strong links with the leadership team. They have satisfactory processes in place to meet their statutory obligations. The leadership and management of the school are highly dedicated to achieving and maintaining the excellent academic standards and high quality of personal development of the pupils. They are approachable and very responsive. However, the current leadership structure is not well-matched to its full range of responsibilities, notably the procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The recommendations from the previous inspection have mostly been met. However, the leadership of the EYFS requires further strengthening. Links with parents through the school are excellent, and they feel highly involved in their children's education and in school life. Parents comment very favourably on the school and its work.

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 the school has a leadership structure that is effective in meeting all its responsibilities in a timely manner, with particular regard to those for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, and which ensures clear and effective leadership of the EYFS.
 2. Strengthen the procedures for the oversight of welfare, health and safety, including those in the EYFS, to achieve a uniformly high standard.
 3. Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers consistently follow the school's teaching and marking policies.
 4. Enrich the EYFS outdoor area to promote exploration and investigation of the natural environment.
 5. Provide a greater number of activities in the EYFS that encourage children to use their independent problem solving, creative and critical thinking skills.

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 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aim of enabling all pupils to reach their potential. Literacy skills are highly developed; these can be seen in the excellent standards of reading and writing. For example, a group of older pupils produced high quality creative writing linked to a current history topic. Pupils' numeracy skills are also very strong, and they can apply these effectively across a range of other subjects. Their ICT skills are excellent, and these are often used to support the development of independent learning skills, as they research topics in subjects such as history and geography. High levels of creativity can be seen in their excellent artwork. Pupils are articulate and listen well. Their physical development is good, and sometimes outstanding, for their age.
- 3.3 Pupils' achievements in extra-curricular activities are excellent, and in some cases exceptional. The school swimming and water polo teams have a highly successful record at both local and regional level. The netball team won the regional finals of a national competition. Individual pupils have achieved outstanding results in karate events. The school has consistently achieved excellent results in speech and drama exams, and its pupils also have good musical skills. Many pupils take advantage of opportunities to sing in the school choir or learn musical instruments. They all enjoy opportunities to perform in public, including local arts festivals, and standards in these areas are high.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative national statistics are available. Results in National Curriculum tests at the age of both 7 and 11 have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. In 2012, results were exceptional.
- 3.5 This level of attainment indicates that pupils are making progress which is at least good in relation to pupils of similar abilities; in 2012, progress was excellent. Evidence from pupils' written work and lesson observations supports this view, as does their performance in standardised tests of attainment in English and mathematics. Pupils normally leave the school at the age of 11 and almost all are successful in gaining entry to selective schools, mostly local maintained schools. In questionnaires, all parents who responded indicated that they feel their children are making good progress.
- 3.6 Progress for pupils with SEND, including those with statements, and those with EAL, is excellent. This is reflected in their outcomes in standardised tests, and the progress observed during lessons. The most able pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities, especially in those lessons which provide them with opportunities to undertake challenging extension tasks.
- 3.7 All pupils are highly conscientious. They listen attentively, follow instructions promptly and approach all the tasks they are set with diligence. Their written work shows a high standard of presentation. They are keen to display their knowledge to each other and their teachers, and work well together in pairs or groups, when the opportunity is provided. Their behaviour is excellent, and their positive approach contributes to their high levels of achievement.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The school is successful in meeting its aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, suited to the needs of all pupils. The curriculum provides good coverage of all the key areas of learning, so that pupils gain relevant skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects. It is well-matched to the ages, abilities and needs of all pupils. The views of parents and pupils about the curriculum are very positive, and both express high levels of satisfaction with the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities provided by the school.
- 3.10 High priority is given to developing strong literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, pupils are prepared well for the entry requirements of local selective senior schools; this can be seen from their high levels of success in entry examinations. All of the National Curriculum subjects are included, and pupils of all ages study French.
- 3.11 In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, curriculum planning has been revised under the leadership of the curriculum co-ordinators for each subject. This allows the school to take full advantage of the subject specialists on the staff. Planning for individual subjects is currently being updated to take into account the revised requirements of the National Curriculum. Clear guidelines ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to make progress.
- 3.12 The provision for pupils with EAL and SEND, including those with statements, is highly effective in meeting their needs. Detailed education plans give clear targets, and these are reviewed regularly with staff and parents to ensure that they are appropriate to pupils' needs. These are supplemented, where required, by carefully planned one-to-one lessons from specialist learning support teachers. Pupils identified by the school as being more able are supported well; the recent focus on meeting their needs through the provision of challenging learning activities has strengthened this aspect of curriculum planning.
- 3.13 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education (RE) lessons promote a tolerance of diversity, and a respect for other faiths. Where appropriate, the curriculum provides a balanced coverage of political views. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of British values and institutions. Interviews with pupils indicate all of these areas are effectively covered by the curriculum.
- 3.14 The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of suitable opportunities for extra-curricular activities. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in sport, music and drama, including major school productions. A broad range of after-school clubs, suitable for all ages, provide additional opportunities to extend their learning beyond the school day.
- 3.15 An excellent range of educational outings and visits to the school support pupils' learning extremely well. These have recently included visits from local religious leaders, the police and medical professionals. The school has forged good links with the community, especially local churches, including fundraising for children's hospitals and animal welfare centres. Annual residential trips for all the older pupils to outdoor education centres allow them to develop teamwork and social skills, as well as their personal resilience. They are also prepared well for their transition to senior school by a range of visits and talks by former pupils.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 Teaching supports the school's aims and enables pupils to make excellent progress. Lessons are almost always carefully planned, with clear learning objectives, to ensure all pupils are supported and challenged. Management of time is good, and the pace of lessons is matched well to the learning requirements of the pupils. Teachers use different teaching strategies to interest and enthuse pupils, supported by the good use of resources. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, a crime scene scenario was highly effective in using role play to inspire imaginative literacy work.
- 3.18 The teachers' subject knowledge is strong, supported by the effective use of specialist teachers in some subjects. Teachers know their pupils well and make generally good provision for needs of different abilities, enabling all pupils to acquire new knowledge, develop their skills, improve their understanding and make good progress. The sharing of good teaching practice has improved and developed in line with a recommendation of the previous report.
- 3.19 Overall, more able pupils and those with SEND and EAL are identified and supported well. Provision is made in planning to ensure that these pupils have opportunity to make progress within lessons, sometimes with help from a teaching assistant. Pupils with a statement are supported particularly well. However, in a very small minority of lessons, planning does not fully take into account the needs of the most able pupils.
- 3.20 Skilful questioning in many lessons encourages pupils to think carefully, and is used to assess their knowledge; planning is adjusted in the light of this. Teachers make good use of standardised assessments to track pupils' progress. In some subjects, targets and challenges are used effectively to promote increased effort and learning. Marking is regular and includes encouraging comments. It usually follows the school's policy and includes suggestions for improvement. Pupils value these suggestions and feedback given orally, and frequently discuss outcomes with their teacher. In a very small minority of cases, these next steps are not provided; the school's clear policies are not being followed.
- 3.21 In their questionnaire responses, pupils were very appreciative of the help they receive from their teachers. They think homework is well set and important as it helps them make good progress and supports the work carried out in lessons.
- 3.22 Teaching promotes tolerance and respect in the classroom, with pupils working well together, regardless of background. Balanced coverage of different political views is provided, as in a Second World War topic that considered both the German and British viewpoints. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally excellent. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils and use praise frequently to promote high levels of effort.
- 3.23 Almost all classrooms are bright, with excellent displays to celebrate pupils' work. Most are equipped with computer projectors which are used effectively. A newly equipped ICT suite has enabled excellent progress in the pupils' skills in this subject, and is frequently used as a facility for research and the presentation of work. Pupils are often able to work together in class, enabling discussion of ideas and collaboration on projects and tasks. There is a good balance between this and independent work. As the pupils move up through the school, teaching ensures that

they take increasing responsibility for their own progress and become more independent in their learning and are able to set their own targets.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim of taking active steps to equip pupils to take their place in a multi-cultural society as confident, polite, compassionate and tolerant individuals.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are confident and self-aware and many are emotionally mature for their age. The pupils can explore their feelings and reflect upon them. For example, in assemblies, pupils considered 'Treasures that couldn't be seen' and shared moments of reflection whilst saying prayers. They watched with excitement and awe as duck eggs hatched in the classroom. They are caring and considerate of the feelings of others, and show respect and interest when discussing their beliefs. They regularly help to celebrate religious festivals of different faiths.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and understand why rules, including the law of the land, are necessary to allow all pupils to feel comfortable and safe. They make excellent behaviour choices that benefit themselves and others, and accept responsibility for their own actions. Jealousy was discussed in detail when the Year 2 class was retelling a Katie Morag story. They care for each other and are highly supportive of each other in lessons. Moral awareness can be seen in assemblies as pupils nominate each other for awards that recognise kindness and effort. In displays such as the 'friendship tree', pupils show they feel valued and value each other.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. They are polite and helpful. They are proud of their school and know they are valued here. They take posts of responsibility very seriously and show respect for the role of monitors in the community. Older pupils look after the younger ones through their roles as monitors and 'reading buddies'. They welcome and look after new pupils and visitors. Pupils say they really gain from opportunities in numerous sports fixtures and outdoor challenge trips to develop their teamwork skills. They enjoy sharing the successes of others in assemblies when achievements are acknowledged and certificates awarded. Pupils show empathy and have responded effectively to the needs of less fortunate people through their extensive charity fundraising, showing a strong awareness of the benefits this can bring to their own lives and self-respect.
- 4.6 The pupils' knowledge of British institutions and values is good. Younger pupils learn about the role of the Prime Minister and know that locally there is a representative in Parliament elected by their parents and other people. They hold class elections and discuss issues such as the fairness of everyone having a vote.
- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development and understanding is good. Through class discussions and lessons they learn about the multi-cultural world in which they live, so that they value the achievements of those from different backgrounds. They enjoy many stimulating cultural experiences in school and on visits, including those of the Western cultural tradition. Members of a local orchestra have visited the school and pupils often attend concerts, drama productions and local art galleries and exhibitions. Pupils share the national and cultural celebrations of fellow pupils from

other countries, including Persian New Year. Pupils are aware of events happening in the wider world as current news items are raised in assemblies.

- 4.8 By the time the pupils leave the school they have an excellent level of personal development, being polite and confident and ready for the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The school provides highly effective support and guidance in accordance with its aim to cater for the emotional needs of its pupils in a caring and disciplined environment. Questionnaire responses from both parents and pupils indicate that they feel the school is a happy and welcoming environment, where pupils enjoy being at school. All pupils are confident that they can approach any member of staff with a problem.
- 4.11 Relationships between staff and pupil, and amongst the pupils themselves, are usually excellent, and a strength of the school. Warm mutual respect can be observed between staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves. Excellent communication in a small school ensures that pastoral issues are quickly shared as necessary between all staff.
- 4.12 The school encourages a healthy lifestyle through specific PSHE topics, and the provision of frequent exercise in sport and physical education. Parents are regularly provided with healthy eating guidance and the pupils' packed lunches are generally appetising and well-balanced. However, not all parents choose to follow these guidelines.
- 4.13 All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school achieved high standards of behaviour and this view was confirmed during the inspection. Pupils are extremely polite and considerate and staff have high expectations of behaviour and courtesy. The school's reward system strongly promotes these values. Poor behaviour is dealt with through a suitable range of sanctions, although these are rarely needed.
- 4.14 A very small number of concerns were raised in the questionnaires about the school's response to bullying, but inspectors judge that the school's actions are appropriate. The team's interviews with pupils indicate that such incidents are very rare; pupils say that they are confident that cases are addressed promptly. Meetings with staff and a scrutiny of behaviour records support this picture.
- 4.15 The school has numerous informal ways for pupils to communicate their opinions and suggestions. Evidence from the questionnaires and interviews indicates that these are effective. The school has a suitable accessibility plan to improve the educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is sound.
- 4.17 There is a designated senior member of staff responsible for the schools' safeguarding arrangements, and all staff receive child protection training at suitable intervals. However, the safeguarding policy had not been amended in a sufficiently timely manner to meet the most recent guidance. The policy was brought up to date by the school prior to the start of the inspection. Inspectors found that practice reflected the updated policy and changes that had been made as a result of previous experiences. For example, the school makes prompt referrals and works well with local child protection agencies when required. Appropriate procedures are followed in appointing new staff, and those involved receive relevant training. The single central register of staff appointments required a small number of minor additions in order to meet requirements.
- 4.18 Health and safety procedures are sound overall. Eight staff have appropriate first-aid training, and pupils are cared for in a suitable medical room if they become unwell at school. First aid boxes are checked on a regular basis. Strict procedures are in place to ensure the safe administration of medicines, and accidents are efficiently recorded. Staff show a good awareness of pupils with specific medical conditions.
- 4.19 There are appropriate risk assessments to cover the full range of activities that take place. The preparation for outings is thorough, and all necessary checks are made in advance. However, the monitoring of health and safety risks on the school site lacks rigour, as a small number of potential hazards were identified. The school took prompt action to rectify these during the course of the inspection. The necessary steps to reduce the risk from fire are implemented well; fire evacuation practices are carried out regularly, the equipment is correctly maintained and fire exit routes are clearly displayed throughout the school.
- 4.20 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 sound.
- 5.2 The proprietors have a long association with the school and are known well by many members of the community. They support the aims and ethos of the school through a strong working relationship with the school's leaders and share a total commitment to the school's future success. The proprietors provide a good balance of support and stimulus to the school's leadership. They have an adequate understanding of current educational practice to allow them to oversee provision in the school.
- 5.3 Communication between the proprietors and senior management is good. There are regular meetings, supported by much informal contact. The proprietors attend many events and functions and make frequent visits during the school day. This enables them to maintain a very good understanding of the life of the school, and the views of parents and pupils. Careful financial control ensures that the school has sustained a clear and realistic development programme, and prudent investment in staff and resources ensures that the school is provided with adequate means to support the pupils' academic and personal development.
- 5.4 The school's proprietors understand their regulatory responsibilities, and carry out the required annual review of safeguarding arrangements. However, insufficient care has been taken to ensure that these reflect changes to the requirements in a sufficiently timely manner. In addition, the implementation of health and safety procedures, and associated risk assessments, are not sufficiently rigorous, as a small number of concerns had to be dealt with during course the inspection.

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 sound.
- 5.6 The leadership and management of the school have many strengths and the school is successful in achieving all of its aims. School leaders are highly committed to their role. This was recognised by the parents that responded to the questionnaire, who all feel that the school is well led and managed. All members of the community feel that leaders are highly visible and can be approached with confidence to share ideas or discuss concerns, and give a prompt response to queries.
- 5.7 The leadership team consists of the head teacher and a newly appointed curriculum leader. Leadership responsibility for the EYFS is shared between the head teacher and the Early Years co-ordinator. This current structure is not well matched to the range of responsibilities placed upon the school, particularly with regard to the formulation and implementing of policies for the welfare and safety of the pupils. Consequently, there are deficiencies in some areas; the leadership of the EYFS requires strengthening, as identified in the previous inspection.
- 5.8 There are many examples of good practice in welfare, health and safety, such as the fire procedures and arrangements for school trips off site, and all staff are highly committed to the welfare of pupils. However, the safeguarding policy and central

record of staff appointments required amendment prior to the start of the inspection in order to meet the latest requirements, and a small number of potential hazards on site were identified. The school recognises the need to improve the expertise and increase the non-teaching time allocated to senior staff in order to ensure that these aspects are properly managed in future.

- 5.9 The excellent achievements and personal development of the pupils, as well as the high quality of pastoral care provided, reflect the leaders' clear vision to provide the best educational experience for its pupils. The senior team is extremely responsive to the needs of all pupils, and provides a caring, supportive and stimulating environment. They successfully nurture an ethos which places value on a respect for others, fairness and democracy.
- 5.10 Leaders make good use of self-evaluation to plan for the future development of the school. A recent survey of the parents and pupils resulted in additions to the school development plan and changes to practice within the school. For example, a few comments about poor behaviour resulted in the introduction of 'worry boxes', so leaders can monitor pastoral concerns amongst pupils more effectively. The school development plan has been revised in the light of the recommendation of the previous inspection, and is now more focused and appropriately funded. Recent changes to the curriculum and increased ICT provision have also resulted from this process. The other recommendations of the previous inspection have almost all been met. These include the development of the role of subject co-ordinators, who now play a much more prominent role in planning the curriculum in their subject areas, and supporting other staff.
- 5.11 The school is staffed by well-qualified teachers who are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all children, including welfare, safeguarding and health and safety. Recent training has taken place in first aid and child protection.
- 5.12 A formal system of appraisal fosters the development of teaching staff, although the headteacher has not been appraised formally. Recent training has raised awareness of the new changes to the curriculum and in meeting the needs of more able pupils. In addition, members of staff are given regular opportunities to attend courses to further their personal professional development; they then share the outcomes with colleagues. The induction of new staff is comprehensive and thorough, and enables them to adapt quickly to school routines so that they can carry out their roles effectively.
- 5.13 The sharing of good practice, as recommended in the previous inspection, takes place as staff regularly observe one another's lessons. Monitoring procedures to ensure the consistent quality of teaching include work scrutiny, informal visits to classes and a weekly review of teachers' planning. Nevertheless, some inconsistencies remain in the implementation of the school's teaching and marking policies by a small number of teachers.
- 5.14 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire support this view. Notably, parents stated that they would recommend the school to others, and felt encouraged to become involved in events and other aspects of school life.
- 5.15 The school values its partnership with parents. Channels of communication are extremely well established, and staff are keen to make themselves available to talk to parents at the beginning or end of the school day. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with the timely responses that they

receive to questions. Leaders seek their views through parental questionnaires. Where appropriate, this information is acted upon to improve experiences for both children and parents. The school has a suitable complaints procedure which is followed should the need arise, although this is rarely required.

- 5.16 Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education. For instance, they visit to talk about their jobs, and some offer class visits to their workplace to enable children to gain first hand experiences. The vibrant parents association works closely with the school to arrange a variety of social and fundraising events. These help parents and children to socialise and further strengthen the family atmosphere of the school, at the same time as raising money to enrich the provision.
- 5.17 Parents are provided with informative reports about their child's progress, to which they can respond, and almost all stated that they were happy with the information that they receive. Reports give a clear picture of achievements, but do not always identify ways in which future learning could be improved.
- 5.18 The school provides the parents of current and prospective pupils with useful information through the website and prospectus. Parents are provided with additional literature, including welcome booklets, newsletters and also regular emails. All relevant policies are made available on request, and parents are fully aware of how these can be accessed. In addition to formal parents meetings, an annual meeting at the start of the year provides a valuable opportunity for parents to meet their child's new teacher.

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 good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. The curriculum is well planned, and this enables children to develop their skills effectively across all areas of learning, and be ready for the next stages of their learning. Almost all meet or exceed the level of development appropriate to their age. Staff support children's learning well. They encourage them to try their best and understand the benefit of following up on children's interests. Overall, staff use questioning to good effect to extend children's learning. Some activities encourage children to think and explore, as was seen during an Easter egg hunt. However, a few activities provide limited opportunities for children to apply their individual creativity, imagination and investigative skills; adults direct activities too much in such cases.
- 6.2 The previous inspection recommended that children should be provided with additional opportunities to develop their physical skills in the outdoor area. This has been successfully implemented, and children now have access to a suitable range of apparatus, although the range of resources available outdoors to promote children's exploration of the natural world is limited.
- 6.3 An effective system of assessment is in place, and this is used well to record children's progress, future learning needs and interests. Suitable additional support is provided for children with SEND, and those children who are more able are presented with sufficient challenge.
- 6.4 Small class sizes, alongside the strong family ambience, help staff build effective parental partnerships. The open-door policy enables staff and parents to work together to help children settle. The setting provides a suitable range of information to help parents to support their children's learning at home. This is now clear and consistent, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Staff share information regarding children's progress regularly, and parents have opportunities to become involved in the setting, such as visits to talk about their jobs. They receive informative written and verbal reports, as well as progress checks, which they value. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly happy with all areas of the provision, and this was echoed by the parents interviewed during the inspection.

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

- 6.5 Provision for children's well-being is good. The key person system is effective in fostering secure emotional bonds between staff and children. Staff create a welcoming environment and children display high levels of confidence and independence. Children settle quickly, co-operate well, and happily engage in activities. The class rules are effectively embedded and, as a result, children behave courteously. Relationships between children and staff, and amongst the children themselves, are strong; this can be seen in the rich discussions which foster imagination and reflection, for example whilst discussing why a piece of music had made a child feel sad.

- 6.6 Children are taught about the benefits of healthy lifestyles, and how to care for their own personal needs, through daily reinforcement and topic work. Their awareness is good; for instance children show an understanding of the effects that exercise has on the body. As part of their 'Health Promoting Early Years' school' status, the setting encourages parents to provide healthy food for their children to eat for snack and lunch, and they usually follow these guidelines.
- 6.7 Care is taken to ensure that children's transition to their next class is as smooth as possible. This is aided by the many opportunities EYFS children have to engage with other members of the school community. For example, playtimes are shared with older children, and Year 6 monitors assist at lunch times.

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

- 6.8 The leadership and management of the EYFS require improvement. Overall, the proprietors have an adequate knowledge of their responsibilities. Leadership has suitable oversight of the educational programmes. Some progress has been made with the previous inspection recommendation that the role of the EYFS co-ordinator should be developed. For example, a review has been undertaken of assessment and planning, and more time has been allocated for the co-ordinator to undertake the role. However, the current leadership structure has not ensured that consistent strong practice is in place, especially with regard to health and safety.
- 6.9 The EYFS management is reflective and engages the staff team in evaluating practice on a regular basis. This helps inform the appropriate development plans and demonstrate a shared commitment to continual improvement.
- 6.10 On a daily basis, children are cared for well in a stimulating environment. All necessary checks on staff have been undertaken appropriately, and are now recorded correctly, thus addressing the issue found at the previous inspection. Some amendments were required prior to the inspection to bring the safeguarding policy into line with the most recent requirements. Staff training in safeguarding and paediatric first aid is appropriate, and procedures are now understood well. Risk assessments are in place and daily checks are carried out to help maintain a safe environment, although these are not always carried out with sufficient rigour; identified oversights were promptly dealt with during the inspection week.
- 6.11 The members of the EYFS staff are supervised appropriately. Meetings take place between key people and their line manager, although these are not sufficiently frequent. The system of appraisal effectively highlights areas for staff development and informs subsequent training needs. This helps enrich children's experiences within the setting. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals, should the need arise, to seek external support for individuals.

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

- 6.12 The overall quality and standards of the provision require improvement. Almost all children make good progress in relation to their starting points, and all children, including those with specific needs, are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The vast majority of children meet, and many exceed, the expected levels of development for their age, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- 6.13 Children display good levels of language skills; they express themselves clearly and display high levels of thinking for their age. They use their literacy skills with growing confidence. Younger children recognise letter sounds, and write their names. They

demonstrate a good knowledge of mathematical language for size and can order items from largest to smallest. Older children read and write sentences, and are developing a secure understanding of mathematical concepts such as time.

- 6.14 Children demonstrate excellent levels of personal and emotional development for their age. They are happy, confident, work well together, and show compassion for one another. They appreciate each other's backgrounds, and are keen to learn about occasions and festivals that their friends celebrate.
- 6.15 The statutory requirements for welfare and safeguarding have been met, and staff understand their responsibilities to protect children. However, leadership is still not sufficiently strong to enable the setting to achieve its full potential. Health and safety procedures are not being overseen with sufficient rigour. Leadership and management are committed to providing a quality education for the children in their care, and meet their aims well. They have ensured that most EYFS recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully met. They evaluate their practice regularly in order to enrich children's experiences further.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.16 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.