



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**GRIMSDELL, MILL HILL PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The preparatory and senior schools were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of School	<b>Grimsdell, Mill Hill Pre-Preparatory School</b>
DfE Number	<b>302/6000</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1064758</b>
Address	<b>Grimsdell, Mill Hill Pre-Preparatory School Winterstoke House Wills Grove Mill Hill London NW7 1QR</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 8959 6884</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 8959 4626</b>
Email Address	<b>office@grimsdell.org.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Pauline Bennett-Mills</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Professor Michael Proctor</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 7</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>188</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (106 boys; 82 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): <b>84</b> 5-7: <b>104</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Caroline Holliday</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>13 Mar 2012 to 16 Mar 2012</b>

## 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 November 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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<sup>st</sup> 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 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.

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, 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 Katherine Beck

Mrs Catherine Lane

Mrs Felicity Lawson

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector  
(Former Headteacher, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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

- 1.1 Grimsdell, Mill Hill Pre-Preparatory School is a day school for girls and boys aged from three to seven. It is one of three schools that comprise the Mill Hill School Foundation and is situated in north west London. The foundation has charitable status and is administered by a governing body, the Court of Governors. Each school is led by its own head, with the headmaster of the senior school acting as the chief executive. Grimsdell opened in 1995 and is housed in Winterstoke House, close to the senior school. It has its own play areas, but shares the chapel, theatre, 120-acre sports fields and indoor swimming pool.
- 1.2 The school's stated purpose is to maximise all pupils' potential through their individual interests and talents, and to lay the foundations socially and academically for their future lives. It also aims to help pupils to enjoy their childhood and learning, to grow in confidence, and to show consideration for others within a rich, secure and friendly environment.
- 1.3 The total number of pupils on roll at the time of the inspection was 188. Of these, 84 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children up to the age of 5, and 104 were in Years 1 and 2. There are two Nursery sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and children always attend the same session. There are three Reception classes.
- 1.4 Pupils come from professional and business families and are offered a place at the school according to their date of registration and an interview. The majority are from white British backgrounds. Approximately 30 are from families who speak English as an additional language (EAL), of whom a few receive language support. The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average, with a broad range of abilities evident, including a fifth of pupils who are of well above average ability. The school has identified 30 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and of these, 26 receive specialist learning support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. At the age of seven, most pupils transfer to Belmont, the preparatory school of the foundation. Some go on to other independent schools.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 Overall, the pupils' achievements are good; they reflect the school's aims to lay the foundations socially and academically for the pupils' future lives. The school's ethos to enable children to enjoy their childhood is implemented fully. High quality teaching means that those in the EYFS make excellent progress across all the areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils' progress is good but varies more widely. In singing, music and some science lessons progress is excellent. Pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, reach high standards in English and mathematics, but do not always use their initiative. Knowledge, skills and understanding acquired in the Nursery and Reception are built on effectively each year, leading to high achievement by the time pupils leave the school. Those with SEND or EAL are supported well so that they too make good progress. Pupils find learning fun and worthwhile because the school encourages, nurtures and motivates them to do their best. A good curriculum makes an important contribution to the pupils' personal development. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been strengthened by the addition of specific lessons to develop the pupils' high order thinking skills. Activities in these lessons are highly engaging and taught extremely well, though the skills that pupils acquire are not included and practised consistently in other lessons. This hinders opportunities for them to think critically, use their initiative and extend their social skills. High level skills in literacy and numeracy are applied successfully across the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not fully integrated into learning, hindered by lack of readily available resources, and this limits the pupils' development in this area. A teaching and learning policy, developed since the previous inspection, illustrates how staff are to implement the school's aims. Assessment data provides staff with a clear view of what pupils, including children in the EYFS, can do, but this is not used consistently to plan activities that take into account precisely the abilities and potential of all.
- 2.2 The pupils' excellent personal development derives from the school's aim to provide them with important skills for their future lives. Performances at concerts contribute much to their social development, confidence and self-esteem. The happy atmosphere and strong relationships in the school typify excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the consistent implementation of the code of conduct. Excellent pastoral care enables pupils to become confident and have a clear sense of their well-being. Excellent arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety, including suitable risk assessments that meet the requirement of the previous report, keep pupils safe.
- 2.3 Excellent leadership by senior staff and good governance have sustained high levels of attainment and strengths in provision since the previous inspection. They are fully aware of areas for improvement in teaching and are working successfully to resolve them. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed for the most part but provision of challenge to suit the potential of all pupils is not yet fully realised. Close links with the other schools in the foundation aid continuity and enrichment in learning. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to learn from much older pupils and value greatly the chance to use a wide range of sports facilities. Excellent partnerships with parents contribute to the pupils' high levels of attainment. Parents' concerns are considered seriously and determined action taken to resolve them.

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

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

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

- 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 that lesson planning in Years 1 and 2 provides work from the start of the lesson that is matched to the pupils' different starting points.
  2. Provide more opportunities for all pupils to use their initiative, to make decisions, to work collaboratively as a team and to apply their developing knowledge, skills and understanding to a wide variety of situations.
  3. Improve the provision for ICT to raise the pupils' achievements and skills in this area and enable their application regularly across the curriculum.



### **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 good.
- 3.2 Pupils are educated well, in accordance with the school's aims. Their achievements in English, mathematics and music demonstrate particular success in maximising their talents and laying the foundations academically for their future lives.
- 3.3 Children in the EYFS make an excellent start in learning to communicate effectively, read, write and calculate. They convey their ideas, thoughts and feelings confidently. Most children reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Nursery children recognise letters and Reception children use their growing knowledge of the sounds letters make to write independently. Children in Reception know their numbers to 20 and beyond, and carry out simple calculations accurately. The children's creativity, curiosity, imagination, abilities and observational skills are developed extremely well. Physical development is excellent. Children use simple ICT programmes, but opportunities to use them often are limited by resources. They often make decisions about what they are to do, and work well in small groups.
- 3.4 In Years 1 and 2 the pupils' achievements are good. Pupils are articulate and at ease when talking to adults, and they put across their ideas clearly. Pupils read extremely well and this contributes significantly to their high levels of achievement in writing. Their stories and poems, sometimes based on those they have read, are imaginative and captivating to read. The excellent use of a joined script enables pupils to record their ideas quickly, neatly and at length. Spelling and punctuation are accurate and pupils take pride in presenting their work attractively. Literacy skills are applied successfully across the curriculum. The pupils use their mathematical skills well in science. Pupils followed the instructions to make a game where an electrical circuit lit up a light bulb and made excellent use of a mathematical calculation to do so. The pupils' knowledge and skills in ICT are under-developed for their age and used little across different subject areas, hindered by limited access to resources.
- 3.5 Pupils develop strong competence in logical thought and exemplary attitudes to learning as a result of discrete learning lessons, mostly taught by a specialist. They respond enthusiastically and work collaboratively with their friends in these lessons. These skills are not consistently transferred to other subjects across the curriculum. In some aspects of literacy, numeracy, history and geography, the pupils' ability to use their initiative, to find the information they need or to solve challenging problems in a group is less marked, particularly when they spend time working on poor quality worksheets. More able pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, but limited challenge sometimes prevents them developing their ideas to the full. Pupils show creativity in their artwork although sometimes this is limited in scope when templates are over used. They play a wide range of musical instruments confidently and sing songs with complex lyrics, rhythms and tempos to a very high standard. Pupils sing at well-known venues and this has been recognised by an award as part of a national scheme to promote singing.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of seven have been excellent in relation to the

national average for maintained primary schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Overall, pupils make good progress as they are keen to meet the targets set for them. Pupils with EAL or SEND make good progress throughout the school in response to effective support.

- 3.7 Individual pupils achieve national success in gymnastics, football and swimming. Pupils raise substantial funds each year for different charities, including those that support the homeless and children in other countries.
- 3.8 In the EYFS, children show respect, kindness and consideration for each other and for their teachers, with whom they readily share their ideas, anxieties and triumphs. Older pupils' enthusiasm for learning, often exemplary behaviour and highly positive relationships contribute much to the happy, relaxed atmosphere in which they thrive.

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

- 3.9 The overall contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 The school meets its aims to ensure that pupils succeed well socially and academically, while enjoying their learning and growing in confidence within a happy, rich and attractive environment.
- 3.11 The quality of provision is excellent in the EYFS. Children learn and develop exceptionally well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. Programmes are planned based on each child's interests and there is an excellent balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Planning for learning is consistent and thorough across all areas of activity. Consequently, children are inquisitive and self-motivated, and respond enthusiastically to intellectual and creative challenges, enjoying their learning both indoors and out.
- 3.12 In Years 1 and 2 the curriculum is broad and covers all the required areas. It includes French and religious education, and these promote the pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultures. Staff use interactive whiteboards to support the pupils' understanding but use of ICT is not fully integrated into the curriculum. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the pupils' literacy, numeracy and physical skills, as well as those in the creative arts. It takes into account the pupils' interests and offers good opportunities for them to develop their talents. Links with the curriculum in the preparatory and senior schools enhance continuity and a smooth transfer to those schools.
- 3.13 The strong emphasis on writing and recording in the curriculum is successful in enabling pupils to reach high standards in English. It does not currently match styles of learning in the EYFS, as it provides limited opportunities for children to make decisions, to be active in their learning and to collaborate with others. Subjects are linked together, such as literacy, history and geography, and science and mathematics, to make learning meaningful. The development of the pupils' high level thinking skills has been addressed in part in response to the recommendation of the previous inspection report. Specific lessons are now taught by a specialist. However, the application of such skills in other subject areas is not consistent.
- 3.14 Teaching assistants and learning support staff are deployed well to ensure that pupils with EAL or SEND are included fully in what the school has to offer. The requirements for those with a statement of special educational needs are in place and fully implemented. Pupils are assessed to determine the level of support that is

required. Provision for more able pupils is good when matched precisely to their needs, but in some classes they complete the same work as their classmates before receiving more suitable tasks. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was recommended to improve the provision for these pupils. Action has been taken to bring about improvements and in some classes work is targeted at their specific level of achievement, but this is not consistent throughout the school. In mathematics, some more able pupils take part in separate lessons designed especially for them.

- 3.15 The excellent range of extra-curricular activities promotes the pupils' personal development strongly. Drama productions, activities alongside pupils from the senior school and after-school clubs enable pupils to gain other key skills for their future lives. Charity days and other events organised by all schools in the foundation give pupils confidence and the chance to demonstrate their strong music, dance and singing skills. Opportunities to take part in many events develop proficiency in individual and team sports. Participation in inter-school football tournaments has introduced an element of competition.
- 3.16 Visits off site and visitors to the school, initiated through the school's excellent community links, add much to the pupils' learning in knowledge and understanding of the world, the arts, history and sciences. They appeal in equal measure to the interests of boys and girls. Later club activities take into account the requirement to use time effectively, but recognise that at the end of the day pupils require a different sort of activity where they can learn in a more relaxed atmosphere.

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

- 3.17 The overall quality of teaching is good.
- 3.18 Teaching throughout the school provides a variety of activities that capture the pupils' enthusiasm, so that learning is enjoyable, in accordance with the school's aims. Consequently, pupils make good progress and acquire essential skills in English and mathematics that are relevant for their future lives. An effective teaching and learning policy has been developed in consultation with staff and pupils following the recommendation of the previous inspection report. It sets out clearly the expectations of teaching and exemplifies the aims of the school. These expectations are met well overall. Some teaching, including that in the EYFS, is excellent but similarly high standards are not evident across all classes and subjects. The best teaching challenges pupils of all abilities to draw on their previous learning and experiences, and to do as well as they can.
- 3.19 The activities provided capture the pupils' attention fully, encourage them to behave very well and enable them to complete substantial amounts of work in the time allowed. Opportunities for them to work in pairs or small groups to develop collaborative relationships, try out new ideas and solve problems are, however, limited. Many of the activities in the EYFS are personalised to suit the children's interests and abilities. Activities such as chicks hatching, tasting different kinds of chocolate on the tip of the tongue and making rockets during science week promote strongly their sense of awe and wonder. Planning for activities in each subject is consistent across the year groups so that each class covers similar work. It also includes tasks designed to meet a range of differing abilities, although the implementation of these plans is not yet consistent.

- 3.20 The sensitive support provided to pupils, and the informed direction given to staff and parents, enhance the progress of pupils with SEND and those with statements of special educational needs. The use of monitored and regularly reviewed programmes of support and individual education plans enables the school to provide effective support from the time these pupils start school. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide additional support. Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to use their talents in sport and music to the full in school and at home, but in some teaching all pupils start with the same activity regardless of their potential and those who are more able only receive an extension task when they have completed the easier work, which hinders their progress.
- 3.21 Resources are sound and are used appropriately in most teaching. In some lessons resources are not used effectively to underpin learning or challenge pupils to use their initiative. Limited use of the library and ICT hinders opportunities for pupils to follow up their interests independently.
- 3.22 A good range of methods is used to assess the pupils' learning in order to identify and meet their differing needs. Observations in the EYFS identify what children can do although the next steps in their learning are not always identified clearly. In Years 1 and 2, marking often praises the pupils' efforts, though rarely provides them with clear guidance about what they need to do to improve at a faster rate. In some lessons pupils receive high quality feedback to support their progress. In less successful teaching an emphasis on ensuring that pupils complete the task according to instructions limits opportunities for progress. Pupils are set targets to achieve and in some classes they devise their own targets and work hard to achieve them, resulting in excellent progress. A new system to track the pupils' progress very effectively has been introduced. Regular assessments give staff a clear idea of how well pupils are performing when compared with others of a similar age. This information is not yet used consistently.

## **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 ethos of the school makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development in all year groups so that, overall, it is excellent by the time they leave the school. The celebration of diversity within the community nurtures tolerance and consideration for others highly successfully. Through their behaviour and the way in which they care for their environment, pupils make a very positive contribution to the community.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They have high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Assemblies and 'circle time' enable pupils to reflect on questions that are important to them, and to appreciate different beliefs, values and experiences. The happy and constructive atmosphere that pervades all year groups reflects the success of the school's personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE) programme. Pupils value presentations by parents about their faith and how it influences their lives. Activities in the EYFS promote the children's curiosity successfully, enabling them to make a positive contribution.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They know right from wrong. The code of conduct underpins the behaviour, expectations and responsibilities of each individual in the community. Pupils are reminded of its importance and they adhere to it. Class representatives on the school council enjoy their responsibilities and take the decisions they make seriously. They have influenced the provision of a 'friendship stop' in the playground and ensure that it is used so that no-one is lonely. Care for the environment is a high priority. Pupils made a significant contribution to the school's recent success in achieving an international environmental award for schools.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is good. Staff remind pupils of the need to be kind and considerate to one another and they respond effectively to this. Lunchtime and break times are happy social occasions. As a result of consultation with parents, a lunchtime supervisor provides creative activities in a quiet area so that pupils who are more sensitive to the general noise of the school playground develop confidence. Pupils take turns to exercise responsibilities, such as school councillor. They are enthusiastic about raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They demonstrate conspicuous understanding of cultures other than their own in their work and religious education lessons. Parents and other visitors to the school play a key part in extending pupils' understanding of their local community and the wider world. In addition, educational visits to concerts at The Barbican, to The Museum of London, The Museum of Childhood, art galleries, the seaside, the local wildlife park and all that the proximity of London has to offer, greatly enhance this aspect of their learning.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Staff provide strong support and guidance for all pupils, in line with the school's aims. Relationships are warm and relaxed, and pupils say that they feel extremely safe and happy. Children in the EYFS are cared for very well. The staff know individual pupils' personalities extremely well and provide excellent support and guidance for their personal development. They co-ordinate care between home and school well, and ensure that any causes for concern about individual pupils are appropriately shared with all relevant staff. In discussions, the pupils said that they feel safe and well cared for. Should they have any concerns, they are confident that there are many adults to whom they could turn for help. Relationships between pupils of all ages, and with staff, are excellent. Pupils show high levels of tolerance, respect and concern for each other. Co-operation and courtesy are evident in all areas of school life and, consequently, the atmosphere across the school is warm and nurturing.
- 4.9 The school promotes healthy living well throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily, and meals and snacks are tasty and nutritious. The benefits of healthy eating are reinforced through lessons in PSHRE and in science. A good range of physical activities in and out of curriculum time offers ample opportunity to pursue a healthy lifestyle and this is mirrored in the EYFS.
- 4.10 Policies to promote good behaviour place emphasis on reward rather than sanctions, and pupils nearly always show good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Any inappropriate behaviour is gently admonished, and pupils are encouraged to discuss their feelings and manage their emotions so that they are aware of their effect on others. 'Circle time' is used effectively to reinforce positive behaviour and discuss any concerns that arise. In their conversations with inspectors, pupils spoke positively and were appreciative of the care they receive. They reinforced the views of parents and inspectors that the school works effectively to eliminate bullying.
- 4.11 The pupils feel that their views are listened to and express confidence in the work of the school council, and in 'circle times', which they consider effective vehicles for expressing their ideas and effecting change. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- 4.12 The provision the school makes for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is excellent.
- 4.13 The school's safeguarding policy is comprehensive, and it reflects statutory guidance. Children in the EYFS are kept safe and links with external agencies are good. All staff receive child protection training, which is updated with the required frequency. Those with specific responsibilities are appropriately trained to a high level. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are good. Very effective measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, and records and documentation of all aspects of health and safety are kept meticulously, including in the EYFS. Risk assessments are robust and cover all areas of the school, including external trips, meeting the requirement of the previous inspection report.

Arrangements for sick or injured pupils are good, and staff are well informed about individual needs and conditions, including any pupils with SEND. Nursing staff are on duty throughout the school day, and many staff are trained in first aid, including a good number trained in paediatric first aid.

- 4.14 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

## **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 governing body provides effective oversight of all aspects of the school, including the EYFS, in line with its aims, and supports the pupils' successful academic achievement and personal development. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has refined its committee structure so that it operates proficiently, and has overseen the implementation of most of the recommendations from the previous report. The governors have considerable expertise in law, education, finance, health and construction that benefits the school. They draw on their skills to discharge their statutory duties appropriately. Robust annual reviews of the school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection have improved their efficiency.
- 5.3 The identification of a designated governor from the foundation with particular concern for the school, including the EYFS, plays a significant role in fostering good relationships between staff and governors. Through attendance at events, observation of lessons, and talking with staff, parents and pupils, good quality information is provided to the governing body. In addition, presentations by staff and reports by senior leaders to committees and the full Court of Governors enable governors to offer an appropriate level of challenge and support.
- 5.4 The governing body and chief executive work closely with the head and bursar when making financial decisions about educational provision, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Provision in these areas is good overall and takes account of the parents' views. Resources for teaching are sound but those for ICT are limited. Resources for children in the EYFS are excellent. The accommodation is well maintained. The decision to employ in-house staff to provide highly nutritious meals is valued by all.

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

- 5.5 Leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, are excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management, including in the EYFS, are highly successful in implementing the school's aims. They enable the pupils' successful academic achievement and high levels of personal development. The management of the pupils' pastoral care is excellent, and so they learn in a happy atmosphere. In the EYFS and the rest of the school, staff work well together and with outside agencies when necessary to ensure the best levels of care. Staff diligently promote equality so that discrimination is eliminated. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire praised the leadership and management of the school.
- 5.7 All aspects of the school, including its policies, are kept under regular review. Recommendations in the previous report with regard to challenge for the pupils' potential and the need to provide a teaching and learning policy have for the most part been addressed. Senior leadership maintains a determined focus on monitoring



and improving the quality of teaching, and enabling a more precise match of work to able pupils, and this has begun to show success.

- 5.8 Vigorous self-evaluation procedures which include observation of lessons and scrutiny of the pupils' work give senior leaders a very clear view of what needs to be done to bring about further improvement. Information from these reviews is included in a robust system for performance management. Staff training needs are identified, and staff are given appropriate opportunities for professional development to enable them to be held accountable for carrying out their duties effectively and for their pupils' progress and attainment. This has brought about a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school as leaders at all levels are clear about their responsibilities and the contribution they make to the school's success. They take their responsibilities seriously and value the trust placed in them to lead and manage their areas of responsibility. Year group staff plan together so that there is consistency in planning and activities for pupils across the classes. This too has brought about effective communication and ensured the effective review and implementation of policies, although not all are implemented consistently. Senior leadership is working to overcome this.
- 5.9 New staff, governors and volunteers are recruited with care to ensure their suitability to work with children; all required checks are carried out and recorded appropriately. Induction procedures are rigorous and supportive, especially with regard to child protection and health and safety, and the safeguarding policy is clear about reporting issues of concern. Management in the EYFS ensures that children are safe. Leadership is diligent in ensuring that new colleagues implement the aims and ethos of the school fully. Senior staff keep themselves and others up to date with a well-targeted programme of additional training. Welcoming administrative and catering staff ensure that the school runs smoothly.
- 5.10 A new, five-year strategic development plan has been drawn up, taking into account all three schools in the foundation. A sharply focused development plan for the pre-preparatory school sets out a clear programme of improvements based on the findings of self-evaluation. It includes clear criteria for judging success and the timescales for completion. This planning is of high quality and subject leaders' development plans feed into this. It includes reference to the outcomes of suitably ambitious planning for improvement in the EYFS, which reflects the setting's ability to sustain its existing excellent standards. Among the main priorities of the whole-school plan is the determination to improve the pupils' achievement in ICT and ensure the consistency of provision for more able pupils.
- 5.11 Excellent, constructive relationships with parents, carers and guardians, established in the EYFS, are successful in enabling the school to meet its aims to promote the pupils' social and academic development. In their comments and responses to the questionnaires, most parents were fully supportive of the school. They particularly praised the provision for music and the way the school cares for their children, providing them with a happy environment in which to learn and to make a start to their school life. A very small number of parents expressed concerns that homework is not provided in mathematics except in the holidays and that more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Inspection evidence confirms parents' positive views. Inspectors found that challenge for more able pupils is inconsistent across classes. While specific mathematics activities are not provided as part of homework, parents receive sufficient guidance about mathematical activities undertaken in class to enable them to become actively involved in the work and progress of their children at home.

- 5.12 Parents of current and prospective pupils receive high quality information through the school's website and prospectus, including all required documents. Detailed newsletters, 'at homes', parents' consultation evenings and well-attended curriculum afternoons that explain, for example, how children learn to write, keep parents up to date about their children's progress. Comprehensive annual reports of pupils' achievements provide a clear picture of what pupils can do and their targets for improvement. The school actively seeks the views of parents about the quality of provision to identify strengths and areas to improve.
- 5.13 The parents' association plays a key role in sustaining the school's close partnership with parents through the organisation of successful fund-raising events for charities and the school. Parents make valuable contributions to school life, attending assemblies, and assisting with school trips and special events.
- 5.14 The procedures for dealing with formal parental complaints are appropriate although they are seldom invoked. Parents' informal concerns receive prompt personal attention.

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