



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**DANES HILL PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## Danes Hill Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Danes Hill Preparatory School</b>
DfE Number	<b>936/6272</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>269433</b>
Address	<b>Danes Hill Preparatory School Leatherhead Road Oxshott Surrey KT22 0JG</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01372 842346</b>
Fax Number	<b>01372 844778</b>
Email Address	<b>office@daneshill.surrey.sch.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Willie Murdock</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Geoff Toms</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>886</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (484 boys; 402 girls;)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>0</b> 5-11: <b>559</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>146</b> 11-18: <b>181</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Sally-Anne Shelton</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>11 Jun 2013 to 14 Jun 2013</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 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. 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. **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 other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Jane Chesterfield	Reporting Inspector
Mr Jimmy Beale	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Crouch	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Neil Jones	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr John Preston	Team Inspector (Senior Master, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Robson	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, SoH school)
Mr Andrew Salmond Smith	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Judith Scotcher	Team Inspector (Former Head, GDST school)
Dr Simon Willcocks	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mr Chris Manville	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Danes Hill Preparatory School is a very large day school for girls and boys situated in the village of Oxshott in Surrey. The school was opened in 1947 as a boarding and day school for boys, but closed its boarding provision in 1975. The site for the current pre-prep school was bought in 1982, and the school became fully co-educational after this. The school is owned by the Vernon Educational Trust which is a registered charity and a limited company with the board of governors acting as trustees.
- 1.2 The school's aims are: to provide a broad based education with sufficient support and resources for those at both ends of the ability spectrum to achieve their full potential; to encourage children to take every opportunity to develop sporting, musical, dramatic and other non-academic interests, and to guide children so that they become well-rounded and self-assured individuals who enjoy succeeding and making a contribution to both the school and the wider community.
- 1.3 The school educates girls and boys aged from three to thirteen years, offering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Reception classes. Since the previous inspection was carried out in October 2009, the construction of a new performing arts block has been completed, and the school has obtained more land to provide a range of new playing fields, an outdoor classroom and a full-sized artificial grass pitch.
- 1.4 Currently there are 886 pupils on roll, of whom 146 are in the EYFS. The main point of entry to the school is in Nursery. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, although covering a wide range. Most pupils are of at least above average ability, with a notable proportion in many cohorts having well above average ability and few pupils having below average ability.
- 1.5 One hundred and forty-one pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), and 13 receive additional support for this. One hundred pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 75 of whom receive support from the school. Two pupils currently have a statement of special educational need.
- 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
Transition	Nursery
Reception	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 Danes Hill School is extremely successful in meeting its aims, providing pupils with a wealth of opportunities to discover and develop their talents and become well-rounded and self-assured individuals. From the EYFS onwards, achievement is excellent and pupils reach high standards in their academic work. Those with SEND in particular often make excellent progress from their various starting points. Thanks to an excellent curriculum and an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities, pupils have the chance to find out what they enjoy and what they are good at, so that they are able to excel both within and beyond the classroom. Sporting and musical prowess is extensive, artwork is of a high quality and pupils have an excellent command for their age of a number of foreign and classical languages. Teaching overall is excellent, including in the EYFS, giving pupils a thorough grounding in the knowledge and skills they need to be securely equipped for their secondary education. Occasionally, however, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and be independent in their learning, in the EYFS, because of the use made of the space available.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They value the world around them and appreciate the beauty of art and music, and they have a very clearly defined sense of right and wrong. Pupils are confident and outgoing, but are never precocious. They are modest about their own achievements but are always ready to acknowledge the achievements of others. Pupils are accepting of others from different backgrounds and are interested to find out about cultures different from their own. Pastoral care is excellent, and small form and tutor group sizes mean that pupils of all ages, including the youngest, feel safe, secure and well-known, notwithstanding the size of the school as a whole. Relationships between pupils and staff, and amongst the pupils, are consistently outstanding. The school pays excellent attention to pupils' welfare, health and safety, and systems for ensuring this have been tightened up significantly since the previous inspection.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management is excellent. Leaders and governors ensure that the school complies fully with all regulatory requirements. Governors support and challenge the school effectively at all levels, including the EYFS, and enable senior leaders to implement a clearly planned programme of improvement. There are carefully organised processes for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and for performance management. Teamwork is strong, although links between departments are not always sufficiently systematic to promote cross-curricular planning across subjects, particularly for information and communication technology (ICT). Parents are extremely happy with the school and what it offers their children, and are very supportive of school events and activities.

## **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. Increase opportunities for departments to share good practice and to plan together to increase links between subjects, particularly in the use of ICT.
2. Ensure that pupils always have the best possible opportunities to use their initiative and creativity, and to learn independently in lessons.
3. Ensure that assessment records in the EYFS provide a clear summary of children's achievements in a format that can be easily shared with parents.
4. Organise the space available in the EYFS to provide sufficient room for active learning for all children.

### **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 is excellent.
- 3.2 The school fulfils its aim to provide a broad based education, with sufficient support and resources available for those at both the stronger and weaker ends of the spectrum to achieve their full potential.
- 3.3 Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills most effectively, supported by the breadth of the curriculum and the extensive extra-curricular experiences that the school provides. The pupils are highly articulate, confidently express their opinions and effectively communicate their point of view in discussions, for example in a Year 7 history lesson when they discussed the similarities between the Peasants' Revolt and the London Riots. They listen exceptionally well, respecting the views of their peers and they read enthusiastically, reaching extremely high standards. Throughout the school, pupils write fluently and this is evident in examples of the pupils' work in annual publications. Pupils have a secure grasp of mathematical concepts and are able to solve problems and undertake investigations, for example in the weekly mathematical challenges.
- 3.4 Pupils use ICT competently; from Year 6 they are starting to write computer code. The pupils' creative skills are highly developed in subjects across the curriculum, particularly in music, art and drama. Their achievement in physical activity is outstanding.
- 3.5 Achievement in extra-curricular activities is excellent. There are seven productions each year and the quality is a strength of the school; it affirms its mission to develop young people with active and creative minds. Those pupils who sit drama examinations achieve excellent results and regularly win local festivals of speech and drama, with Year 5 pupils winning regional public speaking competitions.
- 3.6 A significant number of pupils from Year 2 upwards learn a musical instrument and they achieve high grades in instrumental music examinations. In addition, the chamber choir has been selected to sing in churches and it has been on six concert tours to European destinations. The lower school choir regularly wins a local music festival. High calibre rounders and athletics were observed in games lessons. There are national, regional and county players in a wide range of sports. For example, the U12A girls' hockey team won in a national schools competition, the first 11 football team won the county prep schools cup for the second consecutive year and four Year 8 boys won gold medals in the national rowing league.
- 3.7 The quality of the art and design technology (DT) work is excellent; three Year 6 pupils have had artwork selected to be exhibited for national exhibition and Year 6 were the winners in a regional design challenge competition.
- 3.8 In Year 8, the pupils perform extremely successfully in the examinations for their senior schools and in GCSEs in modern foreign languages and Latin, with every pupil gaining entry to their chosen school. A large number of leavers have won academic, sport, music, art, DT and drama scholarships.
- 3.9 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that

pupils make at least good and often excellent progress. Pupils with SEND or EAL in particular, have strong levels of achievement and make rapid progress because of the excellent work of the SEND department in supporting them. Inspection evidence, from scrutiny of pupils' completed work, observation of lessons and discussions with pupils confirms this judgement. In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND or EAL, make outstanding progress, with the majority working above the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of the stage.

- 3.10 The pupils' attitude to their work and learning is excellent at all levels of the school. Their positive attitude enables them to respond very well to the varied curriculum and their teachers. They are highly self-motivated and organised, and present their work well. When given the opportunity they enjoy working independently; however, limited evidence of this was observed amongst the pupils in the main school. Children in the EYFS are active and independent learners who work equally well on their own or with adults. They are motivated and enthusiastic, making full use of the extensive resources available to them. They clearly enjoy their time at school, often bursting spontaneously into song, as they engage in imaginative activities that promote exploration, creativity and problem-solving.
- 3.11 Speaking and listening skills are highly developed and children listen attentively to their classmates during show and tell and other group activities. In Nursery, children make rapid progress in recognising letters and sounds, and begin to use mathematical concepts, such as more and less, to solve simple number problems. In Reception, children have many opportunities for independent writing through role-play, forming letters with increasing accuracy in more formal writing tasks, such as making fathers' day cards.

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

- 3.12 The contribution of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities is excellent.
- 3.13 It fully supports the school's mission to develop the whole child. The curriculum is thoroughly well planned and is suitable to age groups, ability range and learning needs. It fully meets the recommendations from the previous report and ensures that all staff are aware of planning for children with SEND, EAL or who are gifted and talented through regular monitoring of individual education plans.
- 3.14 The curriculum is broad and well balanced across all subject areas. The recommendations from the previous inspection to change the timetable have been met, and pupils express satisfaction and value the opportunity to benefit from a wide range of subjects. It provides good opportunity in languages, with French starting in the Nursery classes, Spanish and German in Year 4 and, where possible, the option to study Spanish, German and Latin to GCSE. The pupils' aesthetic development is enriched by extensive opportunity in music, art, dance and drama. They have the chance to flourish in the orchestra and music groups, choirs, dance lessons and regular school productions. The curriculum is enriched by the exceptional provision in sport.
- 3.15 The curriculum covers most aspects of learning, although independence and opportunities for pupils to use initiative and self-directed research are sometimes limited. A significant minority of pupils expressed concern about the impact of homework in pre-inspection responses, but inspectors judged that it is appropriate in terms of quantity and is helpful. Good use is made of the school's extensive grounds and for learning outdoors. The recent purchase of the paddock, including a

large pond, woodland and pasture, along with plans to enhance its ecological value, adds a significant opportunity to further develop the school's approach to environmental education.

- 3.16 Work in the EYFS is well-planned to match the needs of the children, enabling them to reach and exceed expected levels of development. The children benefit greatly from direct access to outdoor areas and their weekly visits to the paddock woodland classroom situated at the senior school. However, the availability of space in some parts of the EYFS is limited and reduces the opportunities for active learning. Staff provide appropriate support and challenge through having individual targets for all children with an outstanding balance of adult-initiated and child-directed activities both indoors and outside. Outstanding provision is made within the EYFS for children with SEND and EAL, ensuring that they achieve as well as they can.
- 3.17 Information and communication technology is taught as a discrete subject from Reception onwards, and is enhanced in Years 6, 7 and 8 through the introduction of computer science. However, outside this provision, the use of ICT across the curriculum is inconsistent with only limited opportunities for pupils to use these tools to enhance their learning across other subject areas. Children in the EYFS become familiar with, and skilled in, a range of technology and ICT from a young age as they use tablet computers, interactive whiteboards and programmable toys independently and as part of teacher-led activities.
- 3.18 The pupils' personal development is enhanced by a well-planned scheme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and all year groups benefit from timetabled lessons in this area. Pupils also make good use of the well-stocked and well-organised library.
- 3.19 The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent for all pupils and the range is exceptionally wide. Pupils express great enthusiasm for the type and diversity of activity provided by members of staff, who often use their own personal passions and interests to provide such varied pursuits as card games, juggling and Japanese. Extra-curricular sports activity has grown, in some cases from the interests of pupils, and sports such as golf, skiing and indoor rowing have enabled pupils to achieve exceptional standards, competing with success in national tournaments.
- 3.20 Links with the local community are excellent. The school supports a wide range of local and national charities and regular visits are made to local organisations. Members of the wider community and subject-specialist experts visit school to provide talks and input on specific subjects affecting the children's development. Year 8 pupils benefit from close links with local charities and undertake both fundraising and practical activity to support their work. A very strong partnership has been established with a local primary school to enable shared use of facilities, and teacher links and exchanges have been established, enriching opportunities for all.

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

- 3.21 The contribution of teaching throughout the school is excellent
- 3.22 Most teaching is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and fosters pupils' interest in learning, strongly supporting the school's objectives. Teaching at its best shows a clear understanding of pupils' individual needs; staff plan appropriate activities using excellent resources to motivate and interest them, these staff are knowledgeable and have high expectations, and through their expertise they ensure that pupils are keen to learn.

- 3.23 In almost all cases, teaching is motivational with lessons conducted at a brisk pace by knowledgeable teachers; some is inspirational. They plan thoroughly and provide appropriate activities using high quality resources which engage and motivate the pupils, who are extremely well-behaved in their lessons. In the EYFS, highly qualified staff have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the education of young children, and provide excellent coverage of all the areas of the curriculum within a stimulating, richly resourced environment.
- 3.24 Relationships in lessons are excellent and teachers know their pupils extremely well. Pupils feel confident to seek help should they require it. In almost all lessons, teachers use a good range of teaching styles which appropriately challenges and extends the pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, as in the previous inspection, a small number of lessons make too great a use of worksheets and independent learning is therefore not always promoted.
- 3.25 Individual pupils identified as being in need of additional help are unfailingly supported by the SEND department, the contribution of which is excellent. Most class teaching also matches work well to pupils' needs, although this is not invariably the case. The preparation for scholarship and senior school entry is meticulous.
- 3.26 Almost all teaching has high expectations of pupils; it enables pupils to develop the confidence to contribute to their lessons with perseverance and enthusiasm, resulting in excellent achievement. Pupils feel they make good progress through the support of their teachers; parents are also pleased with the progress their children make. Similarly, teaching helps pupils develop study skills and strategies to use in their future education. In some lessons, the breadth of pupils' learning is enhanced by the teachers making cross-curricular links. Some teachers use ICT effectively in lessons, but this is not a consistent feature of teaching. In many classrooms excellent displays create a vibrant learning environment. Good use is made of the immediate environment as evidenced by field work in the paddock.
- 3.27 Assessment is good, and pupils generally understand the different systems of grading and marking. In some lessons, pupils evaluate their own work which helps them to take responsibility for their own learning. However, there is some inconsistency in marking between and within departments.
- 3.28 Whole school assessment systems are used effectively in the development of the curriculum and lesson planning. Formal assessment takes place regularly throughout the academic year, and the results help senior managers to track the pupils' academic progress. Some parents felt that they did not receive enough information about their child's progress, but inspectors judged that they receive good information based on the school's assessment systems.
- 3.29 Excellent use is made in the EYFS of observations and photographs to record and evaluate children's learning and to guide future planning, which often incorporates children's own ideas. As a result provision is very closely matched to individual needs and interests. Although records of children's progress are maintained carefully, they are not currently collated in an easily accessible format.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils of all ages exude a sense of happiness and confidence. The use of praise and the celebration by staff of individual and group achievements allows for deep-rooted self-worth to develop amongst children. Pupils articulate well and have great pride in their school; they express themselves both clearly and with maturity. Children are considerate and kind towards each other and they conduct themselves with extreme courtesy and politeness. Pupils' high self-esteem and excellent conduct is strongly encouraged by teachers at all levels. The school develops well-rounded and self-assured individuals who enjoy succeeding and making a contribution to both the school and the wider community, thereby meeting its aims.
- 4.3 Expectations of pupils are high and they have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils have a clear understanding of moral issues, and acts of kindness are identified and celebrated in assemblies. Pupils are eager, co-operative and collaborative, interacting with ease. Curriculum work in religious education and the PSHE programme provides ample opportunity for pupils to further develop moral awareness, demonstrated in the pupils' kindness, empathy and understanding from an early age.
- 4.4 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils develop an awareness of the importance of diversity, economic understanding and healthy living through the day to day life of the school as well as work undertaken as part of the PSHE programme. Pupils are able to consider both personal, local community and global dimensions in areas such as sustainable development. The eco-council allows children of all ages to take responsibility for environmental issues. Pupils accept responsibility, contributing to the school's development by means of the school council, where they listen carefully to, and comment on, a range of opinions. Pupils have a good awareness that others do not share their good fortune, with younger pupils focusing on children's charities, whilst older ones working with elderly residents and homeless charities in the immediate locality.
- 4.5 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent. They are sensitive to the beliefs and traditions of different cultural groups including that of Western societies, and the diversity of pupils within the school helps them to demonstrate harmonious relationships with those from different backgrounds. The range of trips and visits offered to pupils helps to enhance their understanding through experience, as does the school's partnerships with communities in other countries, including a school in Kenya.
- 4.6 Children in the EYFS regularly interact with older pupils, including those from the main school, preparing them extremely well for the transition to the next stage of their education. Children's personal development and behaviour is outstanding. They know how to stay safe, particularly in the woodland classroom, and understand the importance of healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school has a highly effective pastoral structure which fully supports the school's aims. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils of all ages, including children in the EYFS. All pupils recognise that their form teacher or tutor is the first port of call for help and guidance.
- 4.9 Pupils appreciate the very high level of pastoral care they receive throughout their time at the school and say that staff are very helpful in resolving pastoral issues when they arise. The heads of section work together effectively as a team, particularly during transition years. The three times a week senior management team meetings are used to monitor individual pupils' well-being, so that any concerns are dealt with as swiftly and efficiently as possible.
- 4.10 An excellent induction programme in the EYFS, including taster sessions, forms the basis of excellent partnership with parents. The close, supportive relationship between staff and children creates a safe, secure environment where children feel able to explore and learn independently.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to participate in the comprehensive sporting and extra-curricular activities that are offered. In the EYFS, imaginative music and movement sessions, and games lessons that introduce the basics of rounders, cricket and hockey, promote a positive attitude to exercise. The school provides healthy and nutritious food; pupils are encouraged by staff on duty to eat a healthy and balanced diet. Pupils talk very positively about the quality and range of food on offer. Posters and classroom activities in the EYFS promote the development of personal hygiene skills as part of the daily routine, but staff do not always remind children to wash their hands before handling food. Home-cooked, freshly prepared lunches help children in the EYFS to understand the importance of healthy eating.
- 4.12 The school has excellent arrangements to promote good behaviour and tolerance. A clear reward structure operates to encourage academic success and pupils confidently explain how the commendation system works. The school consciously seeks pupils' opinions through the school council and they say the school has acted on suggestions such as the purchase of the outside table tennis tables. House points are awarded to promote good behaviour, and house captains from each year section take a lead in organising initiatives. Whilst a significant number of pupils' questionnaire responses made reference to a lack of fairness in the use by teachers of rewards and sanctions, evidence collected during the inspection failed to support such opinion. Evidence gathered during the inspection, including discussions with the pupils and scrutiny of records held by the school, showed that the school's policy on preventing bullying and harassment is effective. Pupils felt that any bullying issues are taken very seriously and resolved quickly by staff.
- 4.13 In the EYFS, clearly defined rules provide consistent boundaries that promote considerate behaviour and respect for others. Children form strong friendships and confide in key adults with confidence. Children are very well cared for by staff who are extremely sensitive to their needs.
- 4.14 The school has an excellent policy to improve educational access for pupils of all ages with SEND, which was seen to be working in practice throughout the school on various occasions.

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

- 4.15 The school makes excellent provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils.
- 4.16 Safeguarding arrangements in all parts of the school are secure and have regard to official guidance, with all required checks carried out and recorded accurately. All new staff receive suitable training in child protection and refresher courses are held. Staff responsible for child protection play an integral part in school life and also have excellent links with outside agencies. The recommendations of the previous report have been acted upon, so that the school now fully meets requirements for safer recruitment and the keeping of accurate records of appointments.
- 4.17 The school ensures that all necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are held, with staff receiving clear guidelines on fire safety. The health and safety committee meets regularly and measures to protect pupils and keep them safe are thorough and appropriate both in school and when on visits. In the EYFS, adults are rigorous in implementing safeguarding and welfare policies. The woodland classroom provides outstanding opportunities for children to learn about staying safe, assessing risks and respecting the natural environment.
- 4.18 Appropriate provision is made for sick or injured pupils, with medical facilities and trained staff. Details of any allergies or dietary requirements are passed to the catering department and other necessary staff. The admission and attendance registers are well maintained and correctly stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body is extremely successful in the way in which it supports and challenges the school, and holds the senior staff to account for the decisions they make. Since the previous inspection, the structure and organisation of the governing body has been greatly improved in order to increase governors' involvement and responsibilities. All governors are now members of one of the three committees, and the role of the academic committee has been expanded to reflect governors' closer interest in the daily work of the school. Subject leaders are invited to governing body meetings to give presentations about the work of their departments, so that governors can show their appreciation of the contribution made by staff. Governors maintain a secure oversight and take an active interest in the EYFS, receiving regular reports from senior staff.
- 5.3 The governing body has a clear insight into the school's strengths and areas for development, thanks to the high quality of information provided by senior leaders, and it spends its money wisely on improving facilities for pupils and recruiting high calibre staff. Prudent management of funds means the school is well placed to plan for the future, and current building projects have been carefully designed to renew older parts of the school's accommodation.
- 5.4 Since the previous inspection, the governing body has thoroughly overhauled its systems for ensuring that its statutory obligations are met. The single central record of recruitment checks is now meticulously well kept and safer recruitment procedures are followed at all times. The governing body fully meets all its legal requirements, including carrying out an annual review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

### **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 the parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership is highly effective in enabling the school to achieve its aims to develop the whole child, and to set a clear educational direction for the school. Heads of departments monitor their subjects both formally and informally to ensure the pupils' excellent achievement and progress are maintained.
- 5.7 Accurate self-evaluation has identified appropriate priorities for development and targets for improvement, including within the EYFS. The school's development plan is thorough and takes into account contributions from the staff; implementation at all levels of the school is monitored carefully by senior staff.
- 5.8 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. Selection and appointment procedures follow safer recruiting guidance. At all levels new staff are mentored and trained in their responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety. New governors and staff are all carefully checked before appointment, and a rolling programme of updating and recording DBS clearances is in place. The

school has thoroughly remedied the shortcomings in meeting regulatory requirements referred to in the recommendations of the previous report. Staff handbooks, as well as the thorough induction arrangements ensure all staff are well informed about school routines, procedures and policies.

- 5.9 The staff appraisal system effectively identifies needs for professional development at all levels of the school, which are fulfilled through appropriate training. Regular lesson observations and more informal visits to lessons by senior managers help promote a positive attitude to school improvement, as well as monitoring how well policies and procedures are working in practice. Supportive peer observations take place, but modelling of the school's best practice is not yet fully developed.
- 5.10 Leadership and management in the EYFS are highly effective and clearly defined management structures empower all staff to contribute to the success of the setting. Since the previous inspection, steps have been taken to address the issues raised, in particular in extending the use of outdoor learning and ensuring all necessary safeguarding checks are completed before new staff take up their appointment.
- 5.11 The school maintains excellent links with parents and very successfully meets its aim to work in close partnership with them from the EYFS onwards. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents show that they are very satisfied with the education provided and the quality of communications with the school. Since the previous inspection, more meetings between parents and teachers have been introduced, and this has received a very positive response. Overwhelmingly, parents felt the school looked after their children well and that they were very happy and safe at Danes Hill. Parents would readily recommend the school to others. Inspection evidence supports the parents' views of the school.
- 5.12 Parents feel involved in the life of the school, having good links with the friends' association, and as a result the school has created a very harmonious and supportive environment for all members of its community. Parents are encouraged to attend school plays, concerts, matches and other school events and this open door policy is very much appreciated by the parents.
- 5.13 All required information for parents and those of prospective pupils is made available. Parents are very pleased with the information they receive about the school and its policies. This includes regular reports, parent meetings and a pupil diary where concerns or questions can be noted and acted upon. Since the previous inspection, very effective systems of communication have been developed further, including the upgrade of the school's excellent and informative website. There is a high quality newsletter and school magazine, and the messaging system ensures that all parents are kept fully informed of the daily organisation of the school. In the EYFS, very informative booklets help parents to contribute to their child's development.
- 5.14 Complaints are dealt with sensitively, in line with the complaints procedure.

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