



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
MILLFIELD PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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Millfield Preparatory School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Millfield Preparatory School
DfE Number	933/6115
EYFS Number	EY395459
Registered Charity Number	310283
Address	Millfield Preparatory School Edgarley Hall Glastonbury Somerset BA6 8LD
Telephone Number	01458 832446
Fax Number	01458 833679
Email Address	office@millfieldprep.com
Headmistress	Mrs Shirley Shayler
Chair of Governors	General Sir John Reith KCB CBE
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	412
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (223 boys; 189 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 11 5-11: 167 3-5 (EYFS): 36 11-13: 198
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 297
Number of Boarders	Total: 115 Full: 115 Weekly: 0
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Alison Blasdale
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	24 Nov 2015 to 27 Nov 2015

PREFACE

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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI second cycle inspection was in November 2009, the previous EYFS intermediate inspection was in 2013 and the previous boarding intermediate inspection was in 2013.

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.

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

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 children aged under two), 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 some of the governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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

Dr Alison Primrose	Reporting Inspector
Mr Raymond Crayton	Team Inspector (Deputy Head (Academic), IAPS school)
Mr Richard Evans	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Naomi Fowke	Team Inspector (Former Headmistress, ISA school)
Mr Christian Heinrich	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Nicholas Parsons	Team Inspector (Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mrs Gillian Smith	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Dr Steven Bailey	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Cathy Gainer	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding, IAPS school)
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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Millfield Preparatory School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 13. Founded in 1946, the school is part of the Millfield foundation, a charitable trust administered by a board of governors who are both the directors of the company and trustees of the charity. The aim of the school is to discover the potential within each pupil through providing pastoral, academic, community, sporting and global opportunities, so that all pupils can identify their interests, nurture their talents and develop their full potential. The school seeks to make provision for pupils of all abilities, and to provide individual, personalised support and encouragement.
- 1.2 The school is located in Somerset on a site of 160 acres on the outskirts of Glastonbury, three miles from Millfield senior school. The pre-preparatory department (pre-prep), for children from the ages of two to seven years, is located on the same site as the prep school (prep), for pupils aged eight to thirteen, and shares its facilities. It includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children from the ages of two to five. There are five mixed-age boarding houses, three for boys and two for girls, all located within the school grounds. Recent developments have included the installation of floodlights in the outdoor riding arena, the provision of a new sports pavilion, refurbishment of dining areas and enhancement of the facilities for design and technology (DT). A new headmistress took up post in September 2010 and the senior leadership team has been restructured. A new head of pre-prep and a new head of boarding have been appointed since the previous inspections.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 412 pupils in the school: 223 boys and 189 girls. There were 47 children in the EYFS, organised into 3 groups. The school has identified 127 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 1 has a statement of special educational needs. Additional support is provided by the school for 98 of these pupils. There are 55 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), and 38 of these receive English language support.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Pupils come from a range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and include a number whose parents work overseas. Around one-fifth of the pupils are from abroad, mainly from countries within Europe and Asia. Day pupils come from within a 20-mile radius.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) 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 An excellent curriculum provides all pupils with opportunities to achieve well, and often excel, in an extremely wide range of subjects, sports and activities. A team of highly committed and dedicated teachers includes specialists in many fields. Teaching in the classroom is good; it is always positive and encouraging, and often highly engaging. At times it lacks pace so that pupils are not fully challenged and extended during lessons. The school is extremely successful at identifying pupils' strengths and talents, and provides many opportunities to support and nurture them. Pupils with SEND, including any with a statement of special educational needs, or EAL make rapid progress due to the excellent specialist provision. In the EYFS the recommendations of the previous inspection to provide planned opportunities for children's use of information and communication technology (ICT) and to further develop assessment procedures have been met in full.
- 2.2 From the EYFS to Year 8, pupils' personal development is excellent. The excellent and well-integrated pastoral care provision across the school extends into the boarding environment and ensures that every pupil is well known and well cared for. The high quality support and guidance provided by the school successfully prepare pupils of all ages for the next stage of their education. The revised personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is linked effectively with the school's medical care and counselling provision, fully supporting the pupils' personal development. Form tutors, house parents and senior leaders carefully monitor pupils' progress and achievements in both academic subjects and extra-curricular activities. Welfare, health and safety are excellent; health and safety matters are meticulously addressed and effective attention is paid to all safeguarding procedures. The quality of boarding is excellent and makes a strong contribution to the boarders' personal development.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management within the school are excellent. Governors have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Through the work of committees and link governors, supplemented by regular, detailed reports from senior leaders, they are fully informed about the school and its achievements and challenges. They provide strong support for senior leaders, offering appropriate guidance and challenge. The senior leadership team is highly effective. Following restructuring, it has established good systems to promote effective standards of learning and excellent pastoral care. There is a clear focus on identifying and extending excellent teaching across the school, as recommended at the time of the previous inspection, and this is having a positive impact on teaching, learning and pupils' progress in many subject areas, though not yet consistently across all. Through an effective system of staff appraisal, a previous inspection recommendation, linked to professional development, teachers are supported and challenged. Senior leaders are actively engaged in addressing issues of concern and have established strong working relationships with parents, who are positive about the school and its provision. A previous inspection recommendation to provide parents of children in the EYFS with more information about policies has been resolved, although the setting has recognised that the basic information gathered on new children when they join does not provide a comprehensive picture and lacks helpful detail.

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 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Strengthen further the collaboration between departments to promote high standards of teaching across all subjects.
 2. In the EYFS, further develop the arrangements for gathering comprehensive information on children at the time of their admission.

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 The school fully meets its aim to enable all pupils to achieve success and develop their individual interests and talents. Within the EYFS setting, children of all ages and abilities thoroughly enjoy their learning and achieve well in all areas. By the end of the EYFS, almost all children reach their expected levels of development and in some cases exceed them. The youngest children can recognise initial sounds, name colours and independently register themselves in the morning by identifying and posting a letter with their name on in the class letterbox. Three year olds confidently sing number rhymes using five fingers and name simple two-dimensional shapes. Reception children can form letters correctly, write in simple sentences and make phonetically plausible attempts at spelling. They can manipulate numbers within 20 and make sensible estimates in volume and capacity. All children have excellent listening skills and sustain concentration over increasing periods of time, showing perseverance to complete their tasks. Children with SEND or EAL make particularly good progress in relation to their starting points, as seen when they confidently answered questions in class and presented work clearly to their peers in assembly. Children are active learners who enjoy many opportunities to explore and investigate, as seen in their fascination when observing woodlice on turning over a log in the school grounds. Children think critically and are creative: they made a pretend motorcycle out of logs, and used a range of cooking pans to make a drum set during free play.
- 3.3 From Years 1 to 8, pupils achieve well in all areas of the curriculum and their achievements in extra-curricular activities are excellent. They listen attentively and are confident speaking in both formal and informal contexts. They articulate their ideas clearly and participate eagerly in group discussions, respecting each other's ideas and contributions. They read with confidence and self-assurance at their own level and enjoy the opportunities to do so. Pupils with particular interest or talent in writing produce high quality work in the weekly writing club. More able pupils are quick to make links with previous learning and can apply previous knowledge to new situations.
- 3.4 In mathematics, pupils demonstrate a good level of numeracy and logical thought. They apply their mathematical knowledge effectively when carrying out investigations, and use basic skills to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum. More able pupils develop good mathematical reasoning skills that they apply successfully to problem-solving challenges, achieving success in a national junior mathematics competition. However, in a few lessons observed, the progress and learning of more able pupils were less rapid because the tasks set did not allow for sufficient challenge or because the pace was slower. Pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are secure, and many pupils are highly enthusiastic and well informed about environmental matters. Pupils are becoming increasingly competent users of ICT. They carry out research effectively, successfully create their own presentations and develop basic programming skills.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages perform well in speech and drama, attaining high standards in external examinations. A significant number of pupils play a musical instrument; they enjoy participating in a wide variety of ensembles and they achieve extremely well in instrumental examinations. Through participation in theatrical productions

and a wide range of musical events, pupils become confident performers. They participate enthusiastically in festivals and local charity events. Achievement in art is excellent, with pupils producing high quality work using a wide variety of media; they are highly motivated and many attend optional art activities to practise and further develop their skills. Pupils are inspired by the vast array of art displayed throughout the school, both within the buildings and around the grounds.

- 3.6 Pupils' physical development is excellent. Their skills are developed across a wide range of sporting activities, and both their individual and team achievements are outstanding. They enjoy considerable success at regional, county and national levels in a wide variety of sporting events. The school's various sports teams achieve an extremely high level of success, including the under-12 girls' hockey team becoming the national champions during the week of the inspection. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the vast array of opportunities to compete and participate in sport at all levels, and value the specialist support that enables them to achieve such high standards.
- 3.7 Pupils with EAL make rapid progress due to the specialist language teaching they receive and the exciting programme that supports their integration into the school community. They become competent readers, participating enthusiastically in an accelerated reading scheme. Discussion with a group of these pupils highlighted the high quality of their written and spoken language skills. Pupils with SEND, including those with a statement of special educational needs, make excellent progress. The well-structured support in school, adapted to meet individual needs, enables them to achieve high standards in the core areas of the curriculum, exemplified in some highly creative written work produced by pupils in an extra English class. Through the provision of various clubs, competitions and events, more able pupils are enabled to develop their specific talents and interests, and achieve considerable success.
- 3.8 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence of their written work, assessment records, lesson observation, interviews with pupils and their participation in lessons, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This indicates that, overall, pupils of all ages make good progress in relation to their starting points, when compared with pupils of similar ability. All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, and a number of them achieve success at scholarship level across a variety of disciplines, including academic, music and sport.
- 3.9 The pupils' attitudes to their work and learning are excellent. Pupils make a positive contribution to their learning. They settle quickly to their work and generally sustain high levels of concentration. They co-operate readily in group work, organising themselves quickly and effectively to achieve a specific outcome. They enjoy their learning and approach creative challenges with enthusiasm. When opportunities are provided they contribute confidently to discussions, and are open to both sharing their own ideas and to listening to the opinions and suggestions of others.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 Educational programmes in the EYFS are highly successful in helping children to reach their expected levels of development. All seven areas of learning are covered through an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, both indoors and outside. Children's interests are recognised as central to their learning. 'Holiday boxes', brought in from home, provide a catalyst for identifying themes and learning opportunities. These themes evolve and expand over time to provide a comprehensive educational programme that permeates all areas of learning and ensures that individual needs are fully met. Children thoroughly enjoy the various activities and make great strides in their personal development through weekly sessions in the outdoor learning environment, where tools and natural materials excite and enthuse. Particular emphasis is given to physical development, with the daily Move to Learn programme focusing on a range of physical skills for the youngest children. An appropriate choice of extra-curricular activities enhances the overall provision for Reception children.
- 3.12 From Years 1 to 8 the curriculum is broad and stimulating, and reflects the school's mission to sustain the interest of every pupil and educate the whole child. It covers all the required areas of learning and makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievements. The core curriculum incorporates the requirements of the National Curriculum from Year 1 and includes elements of the independent schools' Common Entrance syllabus for the older pupils. Strong ties with the senior school and the carefully structured transition programme for pupils at the end of Year 8 provide excellent continuity of learning.
- 3.13 Excellent opportunities are provided for the pupils to develop their unique interests, talents and abilities. In art, music, DT and food technology, the pupils find numerous outlets for excellence and self-expression. Since the previous inspection, drama has been introduced into the curriculum from the pre-prep onwards. Pupils, including many with EAL, also have a rich linguistic provision of French, Spanish and Latin. All pupils study at least one foreign language through to Year 8. Many areas of the curriculum benefit from an exceptional range of trips, both local and abroad, which extend and enrich the provision. These include visits to places of historical interest and to various locations for geography fieldwork.
- 3.14 The introduction of personal tablet computers for all staff and for pupils in Years 7 and 8 has enabled ICT to be effectively incorporated across the curriculum, in addition to the provision of discrete ICT lessons. This resource has increased opportunities for independent study and directed homework or research. Pupils were observed using mobile technology to research climate differences, to record observations around the school grounds in a practical mathematics activity and to photograph notes at the end of a lesson.
- 3.15 Fundamental British values are not undermined but are reinforced across curriculum planning, and opposing views are presented in a balanced way when covering political issues. Opportunities to discuss British values are specifically identified within the scheme of work for PSHE and within the drama department. In the former, Year 6 pupils discuss religious tolerance, and in the latter the concept of democratic voting is explored through enacting hustings. These fundamental values are also evoked in the pre-prep through its 'golden rules'. An approach to mindfulness has been introduced into the drama programme, which, along with

regular use of 'circle time', makes excellent provision for pupils' social, spiritual and emotional development.

- 3.16 The broad and balanced curriculum is appropriately adapted for pupils with SEND, including any with a statement of special educational needs. Following the identification of any SEND, the learning support team prepares individual plans that set out teaching and learning strategies and appropriate targets. Parents have opportunities to contribute to the process and are involved in reviewing plans. The targeted support provided may include time withdrawn from class for individual lessons or group work. This is carefully managed to ensure that the overall curriculum for each pupil remains balanced. All teachers are informed of pupils' particular needs, and the majority of lessons make appropriately adapted provision for them. Some in-class learning support is provided for any pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Good links with specialists and excellent counselling support in school further enhance the provision for pupils with SEND. The school is responsive to parents' concerns and maintains good communication with external agencies, including the local authority, where relevant. Pupils with EAL receive specialist language teaching, with the level of support reviewed regularly and matched to needs. An excellent programme of visits further promotes their language development, such as exploring regional accents on a trip to Bristol.
- 3.17 Since the previous inspection, a new strategy has been introduced to meet the needs of more able pupils. The use of innovative 'Eureka forms', where pupils have an opportunity to share their gifts, talents and interests, has been very successful in enabling teachers to identify these and in building pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Parents also contribute to the process. Extra-curricular opportunities are then developed to provide extension and enrichment in the identified areas. These include engagement with a professional symphony orchestra and access to high level professional sports coaching. Through this targeted approach the school is further strengthening its provision for more able pupils and fulfilling its stated aim to identify and nurture individual talent.
- 3.18 The range of sporting and extra-curricular opportunities is exceptional. Pupils' strengths in sport are supported by the creation of individual programmes for talented individuals, whilst a multi-sport approach ensures continued breadth of experience. Activities ranging from chess with a grand master to dance, trampolining, riding, climbing and an indoor golf clinic are all available. A highly effective system enables staff to monitor pupils' levels of participation in all areas of the curriculum, thereby ensuring that pupils experience an appropriate balance in curricular and extra-curricular areas. All of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were extremely satisfied with the range of extra-curricular activities available. Links with the community include sports fixtures with other schools and hosting numerous regional events, further promoting opportunities for pupils' participation and success in sport.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.20 Within the EYFS, highly experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff enthuse and motivate children to learn. Well-developed, comprehensive systems of assessment make extremely positive contributions to planning and the monitoring of individual children's progress, an improvement since the previous inspection. Teamwork is excellent amongst staff. Through careful, collaborative planning they nurture and extend each child's learning and development. Staff have high expectations, and their careful interventions extend children's learning. For example, through teachers' searching questions, children concluded that woodlice are drawn to dark and damp environments. Excellent resources, including many technological items such as an interactive 'table', cameras and mobile devices, are used successfully to promote learning, an improvement since the previous inspection, while the wider facilities of the prep are well used; for example, all children swim weekly from the age of two.
- 3.21 Across the other year groups, good teaching fully supports the school's aim to discover and develop each pupil's talents, interests and abilities. It does not undermine British values and promotes tolerance and respect. Specialist teaching across the curriculum, and in particular, highly qualified specialist sports coaching, enable pupils to acquire advanced skills. In many lessons observed the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and enthusiasm clearly inspired the pupils to learn. Success criteria and clear learning objectives are used very effectively in nearly all lessons, enabling pupils to evaluate their own learning. Where challenging objectives are accompanied by appropriately structured tasks and activities, pupils make rapid progress. To enable teaching to address the wide range of abilities effectively, pupils in Years 6 to 8 are grouped according to ability for lessons, with further re-organisation into sets for English and mathematics. However, in some lessons observed, the tasks lacked sufficient challenge and so pupils' progress was limited. The majority of lessons are well planned, with teaching that makes effective use of the time available. They include a variety of activities to maintain high levels of pupil engagement. In a few lessons observed, however, pupils' progress and achievements were limited due to lack of pace and direction.
- 3.22 The excellent questioning observed in some lessons probed pupils' understanding and encouraged them to apply their knowledge to new situations. The use of multi-sensory teaching methods is extremely effective at engaging pupils of all abilities. Much of the teaching successfully fosters skills in both independent and collaborative tasks. Teaching is supported by excellent resources and facilities, such as the theatre, well-stocked library and extensive grounds around the school. High quality displays in specialist teaching rooms contribute to a positive learning environment. Some excellent interactive displays promote questioning and curiosity, and others celebrate pupils' achievements.
- 3.23 Since the previous inspection, the establishment of regular departmental meetings has enabled teachers to plan coherently across the different sections of the school, including transition to the senior school. Staff training and opportunities for professional development have further extended teachers' knowledge and awareness of strategies to support and extend pupils according to their ability. In some lessons there are good examples of this varied provision, but this is not yet consistent across all subjects. Thus the previous inspection recommendation has

been partly resolved; this area of training has not yet fully impacted on all aspects of the curriculum.

- 3.24 Teachers' effective use of praise and positive encouragement promote high levels of pupil achievement. Staff are conscientious about marking pupils' work, though much of the marking does not extend beyond praise for tasks completed. Many lessons include formal and informal assessment of pupils' learning, and the use of self- and peer assessment helps pupils to take responsibility for their work. Annual assessments and examinations in Years 3 to 8 are used to inform teachers of pupils' progress and to plan teaching according to areas for development. Core skills have been identified and, from these, individual targets appropriate to age and educational stage have been set, with accompanying bronze, silver and gold awards.
- 3.25 Comprehensive testing and screening arrangements are in place to identify pupils in need of support and those who are more able. Excellent teaching by well-qualified specialist staff for pupils with SEND or EAL, supported by good resources and dedicated facilities, ensures that these pupils make rapid progress. The provision for any pupil with a statement of special educational needs ensures that the requirements of their statements are met.
- 3.26 Pupils are very positive about the support they receive from teachers, and all of them who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their teachers help them to learn. A few pupils thought that homework does not support their learning. Through discussion with pupils and parents and observation of pupils' work, inspectors found that homework set, while at times challenging, promotes independent learning and provides useful follow-up to the work covered in lessons.

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 By the time the pupils leave the school they have been encouraged, through the opportunities provided, to develop their skills and talents towards their potential, which reflects the aims of the school.
- 4.3 Children in the EYFS make a positive contribution to their own learning. They co-operate well with their peers; they happily share, as seen in role play, and show great respect for each other and for their differences, such as when giving help and encouragement to a child with EAL to pronounce certain names. Fundamental British values are strongly promoted whenever possible; for example, Reception children voted for dishes to make in a cooking activity, allowing them to experience democracy in an age-appropriate way. High self-esteem is nurtured throughout the EYFS, and opportunities for children to reflect on the wonder of the world around them and celebrate their achievements abound. Children are extremely well prepared for their transitions between classes in the EYFS and into Year 1.
- 4.4 In Years 1 to 8 the pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They have a strong sense of themselves and of each other. They recognise and appreciate other pupils' talents and achievements. Pupils' self-confidence is excellent. They appreciate non-material aspects of life, and, inspired by the art around the school and its scenic location, some of them begin to express emotions in their creative work. Through their positive engagement with the mindfulness programme they become self-reflective and show an increasing maturity in their ability to empathise with others.
- 4.5 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They develop a strong sense of right and wrong, underpinned by knowledge of the school's core principles of courtesy, consideration and common sense. This in turn informs their personal choices and behaviour. They have respect for each other, and show courtesy towards adults and visitors to the school. High standards of behaviour are evident throughout the school. The various rewards systems, including merit points, celebrate individual success and contribute towards a termly trophy. The house system promotes healthy competition amongst pupils and engenders loyalty from its members. Pupils realise that sanctions to prevent or deal with poor behaviour are part of an integrated system to promote high moral standards across the whole school community. Pupils develop a strong awareness of the civil and criminal law, progressing from a simple understanding of right and wrong at a younger age to discussions on ethical issues in religious education and PSHE lessons in older year groups.
- 4.6 The social development of pupils is excellent. Strong relationships exist between older and younger pupils. They act responsibly around the school and enjoy opportunities to take on specific roles. They develop effective pastoral skills and are given guidance and training to help look after younger pupils. In Year 8, pupils develop their leadership skills through their roles as heads of houses and members of the school council. In their responses to the questionnaire, a few pupils felt that they do not have the opportunity to take on positions of responsibility. Following discussions with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of the school's documentation, inspectors found that many appropriate roles and opportunities exist, but these are not evenly distributed across the year groups. The development of pupils as socially

responsible citizens is outstanding. Pupils are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves and they participate enthusiastically in fund-raising activities to support local, national and international charities.

- 4.7 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are respectful towards each other, and harmonious relations are established within their diverse cultures and backgrounds. They enjoy learning about other cultures and traditions, participating in special events such as a multi-cultural dinner and international evening. Their strong cultural development is informed by their studies in many areas of the curriculum, where opportunities are taken to celebrate differences and promote tolerance. The community actively promotes British values; for example, pupils have an excellent opportunity to learn about democratic institutions in the United Kingdom. Pupils develop tolerance as they live and work together, and begin to understand how discrimination has a negative impact on people. Their cultural understanding is enriched through many trips and visits to places of local and historical interest.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, key people enable children and their families to form strong relationships that ensure each child feels safe and secure at all times. Extremely positive relationships are formed with all other adults in the EYFS, who know all the children well, and who model excellent interaction, developing a culture of praise, respect and attempting new challenges. Significant emphasis is placed on healthy lifestyles. Reception children understand why their bodies warm up during exercise and the importance of sleep, and the youngest children understand the purpose of washing their hands before handling food. Children's behaviour is exemplary, and they show genuine appreciation of each other's efforts.
- 4.10 The whole school has developed an outstanding structure to manage the provision of pastoral care, which underpins its aims to support the achievement of individual potential within a caring environment, and strongly contributes to pupils' personal development. The role of the class teacher in the pre-prep and form tutor in the prep is fundamental in providing very effective support and guidance to the pupils. Staff and pupils enjoy genuine, caring relationships.
- 4.11 Pupils were observed in all contexts to be self-disciplined and well behaved. They conduct themselves in an orderly manner around the school, and within classrooms behave sensibly and organise themselves well. They have respect for their teachers and are generally courteous to each other. Older pupils are encouraged to support younger children in the playground and, where necessary, resolve minor conflicts.
- 4.12 The quality of food is extremely good. It is freshly prepared and attractively presented, and provides ample choice. Pupils are positive about the quality and quantity of the food available, and those with allergies or food intolerances feel well supported. The timetable and programme for extra-curricular activities provide numerous opportunities for regular exercise.
- 4.13 The school has a clearly defined published policy for rewards and sanctions, which is implemented effectively and monitored carefully by senior leaders. Pastoral leaders take considerable care to help any pupils who have difficulty conforming to expectations, and procedures are modified where necessary to support pupils with SEND. A support programme is provided before sanctions are applied. The

majority of pupils interviewed felt that rewards and sanctions are fairly administered and are effective in promoting good behaviour. The school has a clear policy to counter bullying, and an anti-bullying culture is effectively promoted through assemblies, PSHE, posters and focus weeks. In discussions, pupils were very aware and appreciative of this, and without exception expressed confidence that any concerns about bullying would be swiftly investigated and dealt with. In their responses to the questionnaire, a few parents considered that bullying issues are not dealt with effectively. Scrutiny of the school's meticulous recording of behavioural issues and any bullying concerns, along with its detailed records of rewards and sanctions, showed procedures to be robust and effective.

- 4.14 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that the school does not offer an opportunity for them to express their opinions or that it does not respond to these. Inspectors found that younger pupils are consulted about matters through their Year 8 'link' school council representative, but that some pupils in Years 6 and 7 feel this structure limits their opportunity to make an active contribution. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 4.15 The school has a clear plan to develop its curricular provision for pupils with SEND, and to further improve its accessibility for any visitors to the site. The plan includes ongoing developments to ensure access to the curriculum for all pupils and improvements to the site.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 Safeguarding of children in the EYFS is central to practice, and all staff ensure that children are well cared for at all times. Comprehensive guidance is given to staff through policies and handbooks, and risk assessments are regularly updated and acted upon when necessary. Attendance registers are carefully monitored to ensure that children attend promptly and consistently. Staff are aware of the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation, and how to respond appropriately in line with the children's age.
- 4.18 The whole school's arrangements to safeguard the pupils are excellent. Rigorous systems ensure that all necessary staff appointment checks are carried out. All staff receive regular updates through training on safeguarding matters, including recent legislation on child protection and the Government's Prevent duty in countering extremism. Protocols have been established to ensure that visiting speakers make a positive contribution to the pupils' education and do not promote polarised or partisan views. Staff are fully informed about their safeguarding responsibilities and have a thorough understanding of the school's effective policies and procedures to protect children. These policies pay due regard to statutory requirements and guidance. The designated individuals and other senior staff are trained at the higher level. Good links have been established with the local safeguarding board and other agencies, whose advice and guidance are sought as necessary. All concerns are carefully documented and stored confidentially.
- 4.19 The site is extremely well maintained. The care and attention given to health and safety issues through routine checks and regular monitoring promote the safety of all in the community. Thorough risk assessments for all activities on and off site are prepared and reviewed regularly. Fire risks are reduced through the routine checks of all fire safety equipment, training of fire marshals and regular fire evacuation

practices. All members of the community are expected to be vigilant and to report any concerns, and the open culture encouraged has contributed to improvements in the effectiveness of health and safety arrangements through the school. Pupils' safety and well-being are further promoted through the curriculum; the PSHE programme covers many topics such as cyber-bullying and e-safety, and practical subject work includes appropriate safety guidance.

- 4.20 The medical support and care for pupils who are ill or injured are excellent. The medical centre is well equipped and surgeries are run by qualified nursing staff; a very high number of other staff have first-aid qualifications. Excellent provision is made for pupils with SEND. A school counsellor offers individual support to address identified needs, linked very effectively with the PSHE programme. The school's inclusive ethos further promotes their well-being.
- 4.21 The admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and stored as required, with clear systems to monitor pupil attendance. Almost all of the parents who responded to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire reported that their children feel happy and safe at school, and all pupils who responded to their questionnaire indicated that they like being at the school.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.22 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.23 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are fully integrated into the school and almost all stated in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions that they thoroughly enjoy boarding. Relationships across the community are exemplary. All boarders are confident in talking to adults, and they are loyal to each other, as well as to the house and school. The experience of boarding is warmly praised by many, and significantly enhances boarders' personal development, as they become self-reliant and tolerant of each other. Able, gifted and talented boarders, and boarders with responsibility such as heads of house or monitors, are not unduly burdened by their additional commitments. Boarders with SEND or EAL are extremely well supported and care is provided sensitively according to need. Boarders have several means by which their views can be heard, and they feel that their opinions carry weight and are acted upon. There is an effective and extensive induction process for new boarders, ensuring that their transition into a new environment is smooth. The older boarders feel a sense of responsibility towards younger ones, helping them to carry out tasks in the house.
- 4.24 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Colourful, informative notice boards in each house display vital information about school and house events and routines. Boarders identify a number of adults to whom they can talk about personal concerns or issues. Contact details for these adults are published clearly on the notice boards, including that of the independent listener and the Children's Commissioner.
- 4.25 Catering provision for boarders is outstanding. Experienced chefs plan, cook and serve varied and nutritious meals. Great attention is paid to the individual dietary needs of the boarders; all medical, religious and cultural needs are met. Boarders are proud to point out the themed evening meals provided for them on particular occasions, such as a tapas night. Each boarding house provides ample and nutritious refreshment and snacks for boarders in the evening. There is a rich variety of opportunities for recreation, with excellent facilities. An evening activity

programme is much appreciated by boarders, as are the informal activities such as pool and table tennis that are available in the houses. Large outdoor recreational and sporting spaces adjacent to most houses can be used in the evenings, some of which are floodlit. Boarders also benefit from a wide range of activities and trips at weekends. They excitedly describe outings to the zoo or to go paintballing or ice skating. Boarders have a clear understanding of current affairs through newspapers, television and the internet, all of which are readily accessible.

- 4.26 All boarding houses are very comfortable and well appointed, confirmed by all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The dormitories are well furnished and welcoming, and boarders are encouraged to personalise their areas with photographs and posters. Facilities for showers provide appropriate privacy. Accommodation for pupils who are unwell is excellent, with separate bathrooms and easy access to staff. Almost all boarders who responded to the questionnaire reported that they feel well looked after by the house staff if they are ill. Boarders generally agree that they are able to contact family and friends using a range of media. They are permitted to have electronic tablet computers and mobile telephones in the house, and they use these to keep in touch with their families. They have allocated time for recreational use of electronic equipment in the evening, before it is stored securely by staff at night. Internet access is remotely restricted and monitored so as to ensure that boarders are kept safe. Each house provides computers and telephones in addition to those brought to school by boarders. Boarding staff communicate effectively with parents by telephone and email, through newsletters and in person.
- 4.27 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Comprehensive, well-monitored procedures and practices ensure that boarders are well cared for, and almost all boarders in their responses to the questionnaire expressed the view that they feel safe at all times. The school recruits boarding staff carefully, carrying out all necessary safeguarding and pre-employment checks. Resident boarding house staff and other adults associated with boarding are all appropriately trained in safeguarding matters and know how to respond to any concern or issue about a child in need which may arise. Evacuation drills are practised at least once a term in boarding time. Risk assessments are rigorously completed for trips off site and for potentially hazardous activities. Within an environment which promotes their safety, boarders are encouraged to develop an understanding of risk and how it can be minimised. Pathways to the less central houses are well lit. Behaviour policies include detailed information on expectations and are implemented effectively. Instances of bullying are very rare and boarders are confident that any incidents will be dealt with swiftly by house staff. Behaviour is very good, and pupils report that sanctions, rarely needed, are applied fairly. The whereabouts of boarders are regularly monitored and the policy for any pupil who goes missing is known by staff. At all times boarders are supervised by suitably trained members of staff, and staff on duty overnight can be contacted easily by boarders. The school site and boarding houses are securely managed.
- 4.28 Leadership and management of the boarding provision are excellent. Boarding documentation, systems and policies are well organised and up to date, and staff are familiar with them. Senior boarding leadership keeps a running audit of compliance with regulations and publishes a statement of the school's boarding principles and practice. Residential boarding staff have a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities, demonstrating the required skills, and there is a performance review system for staff who work in boarding. Weekly meetings of the highly committed house parents ensure that key issues are shared and the high

standards of provision are sustained. The enthusiastic and innovative leadership of boarding impacts very positively on the lives of boarders so that their well-being is actively promoted. As a result of the dedication and skills of the boarding staff team, pupils develop their understanding and appreciation of themselves and others while benefiting from a healthy and stimulating environment. The school has responded very effectively to the recommendation from the previous boarding inspection to ensure that all boarders are aware of the role of the independent listener.

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 governors have a comprehensive oversight of the school and are fully committed to its aims. Through regular formal and informal visits to the school they have a good understanding of its day-to-day operations. They have a clear vision for the school, and their strategic planning benefits from the breadth and depth of the professional experience of individual governors. Governors are well informed of EYFS matters through a link governor with particular responsibility for the preparatory school, who regularly attends school events, observes lessons and spends time with staff in informal conversations and with pupils of all ages. Governors' visits to the school and support at its events are appreciated by the staff.
- 5.3 Governors have carried out an informal review of their own committee structure, adapting appropriately to meet new challenges and changes to regulatory requirements. Their challenge of and support for the school includes professional appraisal for senior leaders. The remit of the education committee encompasses provision from the EYFS through to the sixth form in the senior school, ensuring a high level of cohesion across the different sections of the school. Governors manage the school's resources effectively. They ensure that the school continues to improve and enhance its outstanding facilities with new developments, and this investment is accompanied by appropriate focus on the school's recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff.
- 5.4 Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities, especially in relation to safeguarding. In addition to undertaking appropriate training and keeping up to date with safeguarding matters, the board reviews the school's safeguarding policy and procedures each year. Governors carry out checks to ensure the school's implementation of the policy, for example through scrutiny of staff appointments and discussions with staff. Other statutory policies are reviewed on a regular cycle. Regular visits and walks around the school ensure that governors understand the health and safety issues of the site and plan appropriate investment in ongoing maintenance and refurbishment.

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 excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management of the EYFS are strong. Clearly understood roles and responsibilities enable the staff to work as a highly effective team across the EYFS age range to ensure that all children feel safe and secure at all times. Children's happiness and well-being are given paramount importance and are central to all early years practice in the vibrant, welcoming environment. External agencies such as for speech therapy are readily used to effectively support children's learning when necessary. The setting strives for continuous improvement, with excellent progress made since the previous inspection in areas of assessment, ICT and policy information for parents, and all staff regularly reflect on their practice and contribute to ambitious plans for moving forward. Educational programmes are continually monitored for their effectiveness. Through annual appraisal and regular supervision meetings, training priorities for staff are identified, and an excellent programme of professional development enables all staff to keep abreast of changes in the EYFS. All staff have undertaken a variety of courses to promote safeguarding, including the Prevent duty and measures to counter bullying. British values are clearly identified in planning and are promoted throughout the curriculum when the opportunity arises.
- 5.7 The dynamic senior leadership team has a clear vision for the school. The leaders provide excellent educational direction and clarity of purpose, which they share effectively with all staff, promoting a culture of continuous improvement. The reorganised leadership and management structure is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements and personal development through the establishment of a comprehensive system of meetings and reviews, and rigorous monitoring. The senior leadership team recognises areas for development and provides support, challenge and training as appropriate. Senior leaders are well supported by an efficient team of committed managers and administrators. The inclusive senior leadership team inspires loyalty and enthusiasm amongst members of staff. The positive culture and ethos created by the leadership, including values encouraging respect for others and democracy, permeate the school. Staff at every level demonstrate a strong sense of common purpose and a firm desire to do their best for the pupils. This is illustrated by the good quality of the pupils' all-round education, the wide range of opportunities both inside and outside the classroom, and the extremely high standard of pastoral care and personal development.
- 5.8 Staff with middle management roles are delegated a high level of responsibility. They are trusted to lead initiatives, play a significant part in the staff appraisal process, manage budgets, and update and monitor the effectiveness of school policies and procedures within their specific areas of responsibility. Subject leaders carry out work scrutiny and lesson observations. In many departments these activities inform the next steps in learning and curriculum development, and consequently promote high standards of achievement for pupils. However, this practice is not consistent across all subject departments.
- 5.9 Managers at all levels produce annually reviewed development plans. These are a significant part of the school's inclusive process of identifying and prioritising development targets. Together with highly effective internal communication, regular meetings and termly staff forums, these enable staff at all levels to feel consulted

and involved in school improvement initiatives, and thus part of the process of change and development.

- 5.10 The school takes great care with both the retention and recruitment of high quality staff. All new staff undergo a rigorous recruitment process, which includes all suitability for employment checks. All staff are given a detailed job description, which ensures that they are suitably qualified and experienced and are fully aware of the expectations of their role. Before staff join the school, systematic training in welfare, health and safety, safeguarding and child protection is undertaken and regularly carried out thereafter. A thorough and detailed induction programme enables new staff to settle quickly and feel fully supported. Since the previous inspection, a new system of staff appraisal has been introduced. This is now firmly established and is very effective in supporting the continued professional development of staff. It is overseen by senior managers who co-ordinate and prioritise both individual and whole-school development needs. This fulfils a previous inspection recommendation.
- 5.11 Partnerships with parents are extremely strong. In the EYFS, a range of useful information is available in booklet form and on notice boards, an improvement since the previous inspection, and the pre-prep weekly newsletter is greatly appreciated. The Golden Moments book provides a daily record of children's activities, and parents are strongly encouraged to contribute in order to support their children's learning at home. The school has identified that the basic information gathered on new children on entry does not provide a comprehensive picture and lacks helpful detail.
- 5.12 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents of pupils throughout the school were strongly satisfied with the education provided and the level of support given to their children, and almost all said that they would recommend the school to others. The school swiftly establishes and maintains constructive relationships with parents, in accordance with its aims. Parents are confident that the school has effective systems of internal communication so that any important information pertaining to their children is shared with the appropriate staff. They appreciate the speedy response the school makes to queries and concerns, often immediately by email or text message.
- 5.13 An excellent range of well-presented and up-to-date information is available for the parents of current and prospective pupils on the school's website and in hard copy, providing key details about pupils' busy day-to-day routines along with informative material about the school's heritage and alumni. They greatly appreciate both this and an informative weekly newsletter, as well as the many levels of communication available to them. Parents feel that they can find any information they seek about the school with ease.
- 5.14 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They are invited to special events such as school concerts and plays, and many actively support the school sports teams, attending matches both at home and away. The active Parents and Friends Association arranges termly social and charity events, including a Macmillan Cancer Support coffee morning, a May fair, and a parent and child tennis tournament.
- 5.15 A few parents indicated in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they are not entirely satisfied with the information given to them about their children's progress. Consideration of the types of information given to parents, the frequency

with which this is provided and the many opportunities available for parents to meet with staff, as well as contact with parents initiated by staff to share information, inspection evidence did not substantiate this view. Inspectors found that parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. Parents receive grade sheets every half term: the recently restructured grading system provides them with useful information on their children's performance in five core areas — participation, organisation, presentation, independence and digital skills — using bronze, silver and gold standards. Pupils are enthused by this, and parents confirmed that their children see it as an extremely positive, highly motivating initiative, and discuss the rationale for the assessment with them at home. The twice-yearly full reports provide detailed comments on each subject, indicating topics covered and pupils' attitudes and progress, as well as their achievement. They include reports on individual tuition and coaching as well as curriculum subjects. In addition to these regular reports, formal parent-teacher meetings are held, planned to ensure that the parents of pupils in each year group receive some means of formal feedback at least once every term.

- 5.16 In questionnaire responses a small minority of parents felt that the school does not handle concerns well. This was not borne out from examination of records of complaints and other documentation. Inspectors found that in the majority of cases issues raised were resolved at an informal level, and the school had sought to resolve matters promptly. On rare occasions review with a panel has been sought, and in these cases the school has been meticulous in following its policy, details of which are published on its website, available to all parents.

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