



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST PIUS X PREPARATORY SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Pius X Preparatory School

Full Name of School	St Pius X Preparatory School			
DCSF Number	888/6004			
EYFS Number	EY310513			
Registered Charity Number	526609			
Address	St Pius X Preparatory School 200 Garstang Road Fulwood Preston Lancashire PR2 8RD			
Telephone Number	01772 719937			
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Email Address	enquiries@st-piusx.lancs.sch.uk			
Headteacher	Miss Bridgeen Banks			
Chair of Governors	Mr Paul Clegg			
Age Range	2 to 11			
Total Number of Pupils	268			
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (131 boys; 137 girls)			
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	55	5-11:	153
	3-5 (EYFS):	60	11-18:	0
Number of Day Pupils	268			
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Verity Sutton, Miss Gill Moss			
EYFS Gender	Mixed			
Inspection date/EYFS	08 Feb 2010 to 09 Feb 2010			
Final (team) visit	08 Mar 2010 to 10 Mar 2010			

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in January and February 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government 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 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

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

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Pius X Preparatory School was founded in 1955 by a group of Catholic businessmen in Preston. It is now affiliated to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster and is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors, each of whom is a trustee. The school and nursery stand on a four-acre site three miles to the north of Preston town centre.
- 1.2 The school seeks to equip children with an academic and social education in a Roman Catholic environment which will enable them to achieve their full potential. Its aims are to educate the whole person so that each may achieve the fullness of life which God intended; to encourage real interaction between home and school; to pass on a knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and teaching, and to make prayer and worship an integral part of school life; to be a caring, courteous and disciplined community, part of the wider community, so that each child is aware of their Christian responsibility to society.
- 1.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has 115 boys and girls between the ages of 2 and 5, of whom 97 are in Oak House, the school Nursery. The final Reception year of the EYFS has 18 children and is housed with Years 1 and 2 in the main house to form the Infant department, a total of 62 children. The Junior department, Years 3 to 6, has 109 pupils, housed in a more recent purpose-built extension. Pupils come from about 20 miles radius of Preston and most parents have a business or professional background. Just over half of the pupils are Christian, mostly Roman Catholic, and the remainder are of other faiths. A significant number are from Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the racial mix in the area. Pupils in the school have a wide range of ability; nationally standardised tests show that ability is above the national average. Most pupils leaving from Year 6 go on to independent senior schools or maintained grammar schools.
- 1.4 Since the last inspection in 2006, the school has increased substantially its information and communications technology (ICT) resources. The nursery has been refurbished and a new music centre established. The school's learning support has been remodelled. At present, four pupils have a local authority statement of special educational needs (SEN). In addition, 21 pupils are identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and of these eight receive additional learning support. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) also receive extra support as needed.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school's considerable success stems from its very well established family atmosphere, founded on Catholic Christian values of mutual care and support, and a real sense of personal worth. The achievement of this central aim of the school embraces the education of the whole person and makes possible the fullest development of each child's potential. In the Infant and Junior departments, pupils' achievement in their academic work and in national tests is good in relation to their ability and they do well in a variety of activities, including sport and music. The quality of pupils' learning is particularly high. Pupils are motivated by good teaching and enjoy their lessons. They feel very well supported by teachers who know their individual needs, and with whom they have excellent relationships. Pupils of all abilities and at every level in the school make good progress, although sometimes the tasks for the most able lack challenge. The curriculum is broad and well balanced and resources for learning are good, although the library is not well used at present. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a good, and in some aspects outstanding, education for its children.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They gain a strong spiritual and moral foundation, based on the school's tradition of Catholic teaching and worship. They are confident socially and they acquire a wide knowledge of, and respect for, other cultures, not least from the variety of faiths and backgrounds represented within the school. Pastoral care is also exceptional, making an excellent contribution to their personal development. The school ensures that standards and procedures to ensure welfare, and health and safety, meet all necessary regulations and expectations.
- 2.3 The school is strongly led and governed effectively. The aims of the school are clear to all and staff are committed to seeing them achieved. Management at all levels is thorough and effective. Planning is good, although measures to review achievement and monitor standards are not systematically applied. Since the previous inspection, assessment has been expanded and the data better used; ICT resources and their use have greatly improved, although they are not yet fully effective in supporting teaching and learning or in recording assessment data; and appropriate facilities are now available for any children who may be sick. Parents are very appreciative of the education provided for their children and support the school strongly.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.
- 2.5 The school's registered provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006 and no action was required.

(ii) Recommended action

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. continue to develop staff support for more able pupils, with greater challenges and varied tasks;
 2. encourage further the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum;
 3. record assessment data electronically to ease access and use by management and class teachers in reviewing pupils' progress;
 4. share good practice to raise standards in the classroom, and develop peer observation and focused in-service training;
 5. encourage Junior department pupils to make better use of the library, both for research and for their own leisure reading;
 6. review planning in the Reception (EYFS) class to achieve flexibility for more child-initiated activities, to reflect children's interests more closely and to further promote their creative development.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 Standards of pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills are good. Results in national tests taken at the age of seven, in the last three years for which comparative data are available, have been excellent, and at the age of eleven have been high, when compared with the average for all maintained primary schools. Pupils make good progress throughout the school in relation to their ability, which is above the national average. Pupils are well educated across a wide academic and social spectrum, and pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of Roman Catholic faith and teaching. Academic achievement in lessons and in pupils' written work matches the quality of their results in national tests. Nearly all pupils gain entry to their first choice senior schools, often achieving scholarship awards for sport and music as well as for academic merit.
- 3.2 Levels of literacy and numeracy are high throughout the school. Pupils' subject knowledge and skills are well developed and pupils are confident in their use. For example, pupils in Year 6 applied their mathematical knowledge to effective problem solving, and pupils' knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes was reinforced in a Year 2 art lesson. Pupils in both departments read and speak well, are responsive to questions and give articulate and well-constructed answers. By the time they leave, pupils are able to write correctly in a variety of styles and for different purposes, with a sophisticated understanding of grammar and punctuation.
- 3.3 Pupils express themselves creatively, for example in some fine art work and in some imaginative story and poetry writing in English throughout the school. Scope is given to more able pupils to extend their learning but, sometimes, an over-controlled approach to the lesson leaves little room for personal expression and restricts the learning to a middle ability norm. While pupils with LDD or SEN, and those of lower ability, are supported and make good progress, sometimes the more able are less challenged and their learning is less rapid. Pupils' ICT skills are good and, in line with a recommendation from the previous report, more opportunities are being found for pupils to use ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- 3.4 Pupils reach a good standard in their sport and have a particular strength in chess, where four pupils are currently county players. Almost two-thirds of the pupils currently learn to sing or play a musical instrument; they achieve considerable success in Associated Board and Music Theatre grade examinations.
- 3.5 Pupils have a very positive attitude to their work and activities. They are very well motivated to learn and, in their pre-inspection questionnaire and in meetings with inspectors, said that they found their work interesting and enjoyable. They work hard on their own but also co-operate together and support each other very well. They listen carefully to each other and to their teacher. In a mathematics lesson in Year 3, groups of three pupils carefully and enthusiastically weighed different items, accurately recorded their results and discussed an agreed group conclusion. Pupils in Year 6 worked successfully in pairs to assemble for and against arguments for a discussion piece on homework.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.6 The formal curriculum is broad and covers all required areas of learning, with a strong provision of religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) to meet the school's aim to provide an academic and social education in a Roman Catholic environment. The curriculum contributes very effectively to pupils' achievement and the quality of their learning. Since the last inspection, the teaching of French has been extended to all classes from the Nursery to Year 6. ICT resources have been extended in and out of the classroom, notably broadening the scope for class music.
- 3.7 A strong programme of extra-curricular activities and community links supports the curriculum. A variety of sports are available after school. Other activities include chess, art and craft, dance, sewing, choir and orchestra, and drama, and pupils are prepared for their first Communion. This extensive list is made possible by the very considerable commitment of a large number of staff, and increases the range of skills and experience, as well as the enjoyment, of pupils. Links have been established with the local fire station and some pupils have been able to work on a project there. Visits are made to a nearby Methodist church and to a mosque, and both the Methodist minister and the Vicar of Preston visit the school to speak to pupils in assembly. Pupils meet pupils from other schools through team sports.
- 3.8 The support for pupils with LDD and SEN has been remodelled since the last inspection and continues to develop. This support is carefully organised and liaison is maintained with class teachers and parents. Individual education plans help to track progress and care is taken to identify problems as early as possible. The specialist skills of some classroom assistants and other experts are called on where appropriate, and constructive contacts are made with the local authority. The success of the arrangements can be seen in the progress made by these pupils, including the achievement of places at chosen senior schools. Pupils with EAL are supported mainly in the classroom situation but extra help is available if and when it is needed. No formal identification of gifted or talented pupils is undertaken but teachers are encouraged to provide extra challenge for these pupils; in English an extended reading list allows progression from the standard scheme and in mathematics a new scheme has been introduced which makes good provision for the more able pupils.
- 3.9 The curriculum is planned well and managed effectively. Care is taken to ensure that it continues to meet the changing requirements of the National Curriculum and the expectations of local senior schools. However, neither the director of studies nor subject co-ordinators have a complete oversight of the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects of the curriculum and the different years in the school, so that the implementation of the curriculum, although mostly well done across the school, is not systematically monitored.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 The quality of most teaching is thorough and effective, and some lessons are outstanding, so that all pupils make good progress. Teachers know their pupils extremely well; they are committed to them, ready to offer individual support and setting high expectations. The development of individual target setting throughout the school provides further motivation.
- 3.11 Lessons are carefully planned in both Infant and Junior departments. Teachers demonstrate considerable subject expertise, knowledge and understanding. In the most successful lessons, the pace is brisk and the tasks are matched carefully to the pupils' abilities with extension material available for the most able. Setting by ability in English, mathematics, and sometimes in science and verbal reasoning, achieves a similar purpose. Pupils who join the school during the year are assessed and their needs identified so that they are quickly assimilated into the class.
- 3.12 In some other lessons, where the pace is less well judged and activities during the lesson less varied, the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and the quality of their learning is less assured. Pupils' intellectual development is mostly covered well in class, but opportunities, for example, to engage in creative activity and scientific inquiry, particularly in the Junior department, are sometimes limited by the perceived need to cover the required curriculum for the extensive examinations pupils face at 11+.
- 3.13 Resources are generous and of good quality, effectively supporting the teaching and needs of the pupils across the school, although the classrooms are not conveniently arranged or furnished for practical science at the top end of the school. Since the last inspection, ICT has been particularly well resourced, especially in the new music centre. Interactive white boards, which are now available throughout the school, are very well used by some staff to enhance both teaching and learning. However, the use of ICT in the classroom is not yet consistently effective, either as a general teaching aid or as a resource for particular subjects. The library is well stocked but underused, particularly by pupils in the Junior department, some of whom said they would like more opportunities to use it. The many colourful displays of pupils' work around the school, in corridors, public spaces and in classrooms, improve learning and celebrate pupils' achievements.
- 3.14 Regular assessment, following a recommendation from the previous inspection, is now a strong feature of the school. At all stages, marking is good, with thorough and valuable feedback and guidance given to enable each pupil to move forward. In the best practice seen in both departments, constructive comments are made with targets for improvement, although these are not shared consistently with parents in the reports. An appropriate whole-school assessment calendar has been formed, and clear and effective processes are used to evaluate pupils' performance. Results are shared during formal staff discussions twice a year; these data are used to plan future lessons, to place children in ability groups, and increasingly for target setting. At present, the data are stored in hard copy, which makes access to the information unduly difficult for use by individual teachers.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is a strength of the school. The school fully succeeds in establishing its ethos as a Catholic school, where each pupil may achieve the fullness of life which God intends. The school is a happy place where pupils enjoy their learning. The beliefs and teachings of the Catholic faith are in evidence in the classrooms and around the school; prayer and worship are an integral part of school life for all pupils.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The centrality of the spiritual element to the pupils' life is evident everywhere: in displays about current highlights in the Christian calendar, in the charitable giving to Christian Aid, and in the impeccably courteous and considerate behaviour of the pupils towards adults and towards one another. The calm and peaceful atmosphere encourages personal reflection which is developed during the daily worship; for example, in a Year 2 class where children reflected on Jesus' fasting in the desert and the role of fasting in other faiths. Pupils are valued as individuals and acquire a genuine sense of identity and self-worth. RE and PSHE lessons provide ample opportunities to explore values and beliefs, and care is taken to share the religious experiences of children of different faiths and to celebrate important festivals. In assemblies, prayer and singing bring the school family community together for worship and reflection.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent awareness of moral issues, and their ability to distinguish between right and wrong is constantly encouraged. The emphasis is on rewarding good behaviour, individually and publicly. The 'white slip', given for inappropriate behaviour, is used sparingly but to great effect. The requirement to reflect on what they have done wrong, the effect on others and how they might make amends, is highly effective in changing behaviour and giving them a full part of the caring, courteous and disciplined community the school aims to be. Pupils show co-operation, respect and courtesy in all aspects of school life and develop their own personal, moral code.
- 4.4 Pupils develop very well socially. Pupils encourage each other in all aspects of school life. Pupils, even in the Infant department, sit and eat lunch while discussing the morning's events. Pupils feel safe, happy and content, and thrive in this warm and caring environment. As they progress through the school, pupils are given more responsibilities, which they take very seriously, whether as library monitors, playground monitors, or head boy or girl. Each class in the Junior department is developing a class council.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural knowledge and appreciation is excellent. Pupils learn about public institutions and services through their lessons in PHSE, but also about other cultures and societies, through work in English, history, geography, art and music. Their highly successful fund-raising for charities indicates their genuine concern for those less fortunate than themselves. In worship, RE and other lessons, teachers make a point of drawing on the worship experience and culture of pupils of other faiths and backgrounds.

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

- 4.6 The quality of pastoral care and the welfare of pupils are outstanding. Health and safety measures are good. The care devoted to the well-being and development of all pupils is excellent, helping to establish and maintain the school's aim to be a disciplined community where relationships accord with Christ's law of love.
- 4.7 Staff respond quickly and sensitively to pupils' individual needs, thereby ensuring that a culture of practical care for others prevails throughout the school. Pupils understand that they can seek advice from any adult should they encounter a difficulty. The initial point of contact will often be the class teacher who has a responsibility to oversee the progress of each member of the class, counsel the individual and liaise with other staff and parents. However, all staff, whatever their role, play a significant part in the care and support of the pupils in a community where everyone knows and values everyone else. The care arrangements are underpinned by discussion focused on individual pupils in fortnightly staff meetings and in comprehensive half-yearly reviews.
- 4.8 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent, starting from the headteacher whose reassuring, friendly and caring manner has a powerful and positive effect on the atmosphere that pervades the school. She and her staff model the school's values consistently and, in turn, the pupils develop their own positive relationships with each other based on mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils feel that they are valued as individuals, and this underpins their self-esteem and pride in their school.
- 4.9 Measures to promote good discipline, including those to safeguard against harassment and bullying, are extremely effective. Pupils' conduct is excellent and instances of unacceptable behaviour are rare; in discussion with the pupils and in their questionnaire, the pupils insisted that bullying does not occur in their school. Any misdemeanours that do occur are dealt with sensitively and constructively. The pupils felt they would be able to tell a teacher if someone they knew was unhappy, but also would feel confident themselves to try to support their friend. The system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by the pupils, and seen as fair.
- 4.10 The safeguarding policy meets requirements, and the child protection procedures give clear guidelines, which are well understood by staff and properly implemented. Training is updated at the correct intervals. The admissions and attendance registers are kept fully up-to-date and any unexpected absences are quickly followed up. Good health and safety procedures are disseminated through appropriate information in the staff handbook. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Medical arrangements are good and include suitable provision for those who fall ill. The school has a good number of qualified first-aiders.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. School meals are well balanced, nutritious and of high quality, and eagerly anticipated by pupils. Younger pupils have their eating monitored to ensure they have sufficient; extra helpings for the hungry are always available. Regular exercise is undertaken in PE and games lessons, and many pupils exercise vigorously during breaks and lunchtimes.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The school is governed well, and clear direction and expectations are set for the headteacher and school management. The school governors currently number eleven, all of whom have connections with the school as parents of current or past pupils. The main board meets termly and is attended by the headteacher and the chief administrative officer, who reports to the governors on financial matters. The governors receive the headteacher's report at each meeting, which covers all aspects and each section of the school. The governing body devolves its operation of the school to three committees, dealing with finance, staffing, and land and property. A fourth, education, is being instituted. Through these committees the governors maintain effective oversight of the school, ensuring that their aims and strategy for the school are achieved.
- 5.2 Governors' contacts with the school are close, either by attendance at school events, at meetings or on individual visits. The chairman spends a day in school each term. Governors meet new parents each year and attend parent association events. A new annual meeting between governors and staff, encouraging discussion on a range of school issues, has proved successful; and a small group of governors and senior staff is now looking ahead to determine a strategy in response to the question: 'Where do we see the school in five years time?' The headteacher keeps the governors informed about current plans and school achievements.
- 5.3 The governors are fully aware of their particular responsibilities for child protection, welfare, and health and safety. Regular reports are received and reviews of these areas undertaken. The governing body keeps close control of the school's financial welfare through its finance committee and has recently completed a three-year financial plan. It also has a direct involvement in developing the school site and facilities, and manages the school property well.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The school enjoys strong, purposeful leadership and a very clear vision of its mission, aims and ethos. The senior leadership team (SLT), the heads of the Junior and Infant departments, the director of studies and the chief administrative officer, provide effective support for the headteacher and good management of their departments. The development and sustaining of a distinctive Catholic family community, on the strength of which pupils and staff alike can draw and in which pupils are helped to achieve the best results of which they are capable, is the secure foundation on which all else depends.
- 5.5 School strategic planning stems largely from the headteacher in education terms and from governors in respect of finance, and the development of facilities and resources. Annual priorities derive from issues emerging during the year from all parts of the school and are brought together to form a development plan to be implemented, and later reviewed, in the following twelve months. At subject and class level, curriculum and lesson planning is very well done, and is carefully evaluated by senior management and subject co-ordinators, providing a firm basis for the quality of teaching and learning. In this quite small school, monitoring of standards and support for teachers, although largely informal and in response to teachers' concerns, is successfully achieved. Increasingly, arrangements are being made for a more systematic approach: through the annual appraisal scheme, through appropriate in-service and external training, through regular checking of pupils' work books and by the bi-annual review of assessment data and of each pupil's progress. The school has introduced target setting for pupils, both general and subject specific, and is starting to promote the sharing of good practice in the classroom.
- 5.6 Teachers are well qualified and committed to the school's aims and to their pupils' best interests. All staff, and any others involved in the school on a regular basis, are carefully checked for their suitability to work in schools, and full-time and part-time staff are given regular training for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety, as well as good opportunities for their own professional development. The school welcomes newly qualified teachers and provides appropriate experience and support that meets national standards. The school also mentors student teachers on short-term attachments, and finds the experience beneficial to both the school and the students. Pupils' learning benefits from fresh ideas and new faces.
- 5.7 Non-teaching staff show strong loyalty to the school and are a much appreciated and respected part of the school family. They offer, within their different expertise, strong support for the teaching staff and contribute a great deal to the well-being of the pupils and their overall educational experience at St Pius X.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.8 The school has good links and a constructive relationship with parents, and is seeking always to improve the flow of information to parents, both about their children's progress and about the school itself. It therefore encourages real interaction between home and school, as it sets out to do.
- 5.9 The parents association, through its social events and fundraising, fosters strong support for the school and regularly provides significant financial support for extra resources of great benefit to the quality of the pupils' education. The strength of parents' support was clearly shown in the questionnaire completed before the inspection. In predominantly positive responses, albeit from quite a small proportion of parents, the school's attitudes and ethos, the high standards of behaviour, the quality of pastoral care and teaching, and the curriculum and extra-curricular activities were particularly praised.
- 5.10 The feelings of a minority, that the school had not handled their concerns well, that information about the school was not readily available, and that communication with the school had proved difficult, were not endorsed by the inspection findings. The inspection found that the school has a robust procedure to deal with any complaints, and takes any parental concerns very seriously. The required information about the school is detailed and comprehensive, both for parents of current and prospective pupils. The school website has a large amount of information, including up-to-date details of school events and many of the school's policies. Parents receive helpful reports on their children's progress twice a year, and two meetings are held each year for parents with staff, including in Year 5 preparation for senior school entry. Parents are also kept in daily contact with their children's progress through pupils' homework diaries. They have good access to the school and are encouraged to contact class teachers with any concerns they may have. Many opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in the work of the school: for example at the start and end of the day, by coming to assemblies, to school events such as a house swimming gala, or helping with school trips.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good with some outstanding features. Activities are adapted very effectively to meet all children's needs, including those with identified SEN or LDD, and those with EAL. Suitable safeguarding procedures are implemented throughout the setting and children's welfare is promoted very well. An outstanding partnership with children's parents has been fostered, who are well informed of their individual child's progress in learning and development. There is a clear commitment to continually improve and sustain standards, such as through robust monitoring, highlighted well in detailed development and improvement plans, also in a recent Self Evaluation Form. Since the last inspection there have been several improvements made to the overall provision.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 Leadership and management are generally good, ensuring a safe and secure environment. The setting engages very effectively with children's parents and carers, particularly when English is not their first language. There is a clear vision and a commitment to continually improve, such as through the implementation of a suitable staff appraisal system, ensuring that staff training needs are identified and met. Staff work well together, and are deployed purposefully. The use of an EYFS profile enables the setting's leadership to monitor provision effectively, especially relating to how well children are progressing in their learning. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place that are consistently implemented to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination. A range of accessible, quality resources, particularly for indoors, are used generally well to foster children's ability to make decisions and to work independently.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 The overall quality of provision is good. Adults adopt an encouraging approach and know the children very well, so that children strive to meet high expectations. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are used appropriately to promote good learning habits. Planning is sufficiently flexible to ensure that learning for each child is enjoyable and challenging. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well, and their behaviour is exemplary. Speaking and listening skills are fostered very effectively, especially through structured letter and sound activities. Children's ability to use mathematical language is promoted well, for example, when using the 'outdoor classroom'. They are learning about the world around them, often when operating a variety of ICT, and are developing their fine motor skills through handling a range of tools. The Reception timetable is restricted, impacting on the level of child-initiated activities, also in the way children's interests are incorporated into planning, and how they express themselves creatively.

6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 6.4 The children's starting points in the Nursery are varied, and their outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are very good. Informative assessments are made on entry, in close partnership with children's parents. Staff monitor children's progress regularly and make appropriate use of assessments, ensuring that children make very good progress, whatever their individual needs. Children clearly enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception and are becoming effective learners. They are learning about how to stay safe and will confide in adults. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy eating, particularly through snack time and lunch time routines. They are confident overall about making choices and can work independently. Children share well, co-operate, and show a high respect for others. They are developing their skills for the future, such as when operating a range of ICT to support their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

- 6.5 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

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 chairman of 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

Mr Michael Higginbottom	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Lynn Duncan	Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS)
Mrs Jane Le Poidevin	Junior Team Inspector (Head, ISA)
Miss Valerie Craven	Early Years Lead Inspector
Ms Angela Beck	Early Years Team Inspector