



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ST FRANCIS SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St Francis School

Full Name of School	<b>St Francis School</b>
DfE Number	<b>865/6010</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY403289</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>298522</b>
Address	<b>St Francis School Marlborough Road Pewsey Wiltshire SN9 5NT</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01672 563228</b>
Email Address	<b>schooloffice@st-francis.wilts.sch.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr David Sibson</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Sarah Soar</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>226</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (120 boys; 116 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>11</b> 5-11: <b>155</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>31</b> 11-13: <b>29</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>226</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Rachel Ashman</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>15 Oct 2013 to 18 Oct 2013</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Jane Chesterfield

Mr Eugene Sharkey

Mrs Nova Shoesmith

Miss Patricia Griffin

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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

- 1.1 St Francis School is a day school for girls and boys, located on a large rural site on the outskirts of the Wiltshire village of Pewsey. The school first opened in Pewsey in 1941 before moving to its current site in 1984, where it is based around two listed buildings and a number of new additions. It became a charitable trust in 1990 and is run by a board of governors on behalf of the Hayfran Trust.
- 1.2 The school's aims are: to provide a stimulating curriculum which prepares pupils for their future education, allowing them to enjoy learning and achieve their potential; to develop confident, self-disciplined and enquiring learners, who are able to make informed choices and communicate effectively; to offer a breadth of personal development through extra-curricular activities which nurture talent and encourage achievement in the creative and performing arts and sport; to foster high standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect, encouraging consideration for and understanding of others within and outside the school community; to provide a safe, secure, caring and healthy environment in which pupils build positive relationships with others and make a positive contribution; to provide opportunities for pupils to live out the school's values, based on Christian principles; and to offer equal opportunities for pupils to develop their particular strengths regardless of ability, gender, race, nationality or creed.
- 1.3 The school educates girls and boys aged from two to thirteen years, offering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Nursery and in its Reception classes. Since the previous inspection there have been considerable changes in the senior management team, including a new headmaster, a new head of pre-prep, a new head of EYFS, a new nursery manager, a new bursar and the appointment of a new deputy head with effect from January 2014.
- 1.4 Currently there are 226 pupils on roll, of whom 42 are in the registered EYFS provision. The main points of entry to the school are in the EYFS and Year 3, and the school is non-selective. The ability profile of the school is above the national average overall, with a fairly wide spread of abilities and variations in average ability between cohorts. However, most pupils are of at least above average ability, and in some cohorts there is a notable proportion of pupils of well above average ability.
- 1.5 No pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language. Sixty-five pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and sixty receive support from the school. No pupils currently have statements of special educational need.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Junior nursery	Nursery
Senior nursery	Nursery
Reception	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 St Francis School is extremely successful in meeting its aims. It gives all its pupils excellent opportunities to live up to the St Francis framework of being respectful, honest, kind, helpful and forgiving, of treating others fairly and of always doing your best.
- 2.2 Pupils' all-round achievement is excellent, thanks to a wide-ranging curriculum and high-quality teaching. They attain high standards and make good and often excellent progress from their starting points. Their attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive, and they relish the opportunities to be independent learners and use their initiative in their work. Pupils make the most of the wealth of clubs and extra-curricular provision to develop skills and talents outside the classroom to enhance their future lives. Rapid improvements in the school's approach to teaching and the curriculum mean that these are both excellent. Knowledgeable staff motivate the pupils and help them make the links between subjects to deepen their understanding. The school is in the process of monitoring and evaluating these improvements to ensure that they are consistently and securely established throughout the school.
- 2.3 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate, interested in other cultures and the world around them, and express their creativity successfully through art and performance. Their social skills and manners are very strongly developed, and they live up to the school's high expectations for their behaviour. Systems for pastoral care are excellent, and ensure that pupils are very well looked after and feel happy and secure at school. Safeguarding is given the highest priority. The attention given to welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 2.4 Governance of the school is excellent, and governors have a secure grasp of the school's strengths and areas of development. They have given the school a sure steer through its recent period of change, and helped it to settle onto a firm footing for the future. They make sure that the school meets all its regulatory requirements in full. The quality of recent senior staff appointments made by governors has helped to ensure that the leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school has an exceptionally strong educational direction, and there is already clear evidence of improvement. The draft strategic development plan offers a cohesive vision for moving the school forward. Parents are extremely happy with how the school is developing and what it offers their children.
- 2.5 Just as the main school has improved since the previous inspection, so has the EYFS. Its overall quality and standards are now good, and it makes an excellent contribution to children's well-being. Parents are particularly happy with how well their children are cared for. The setting is good at meeting the needs of the children who attend, though senior staff are aware that the use of the outdoor facilities and the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) are areas for development. The improvement in the EYFS has been brought about by the good quality of its leadership and management, who have achieved much and know what more needs to be done.

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

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

2.6 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure the new initiatives in teaching and curriculum are securely and consistently established through continued monitoring and evaluation.
2. Implement the new strategic development plan to set out the school's direction and priorities for the future.
3. Further develop the outside areas and ICT provision in the EYFS to offer more opportunities for challenging learning.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is very successful in meeting its aims of allowing pupils to enjoy learning and achieve their potential, and of developing confident, self-disciplined and enquiring learners, able to make informed choices and communicate effectively. Pupils achieve significant success in gaining places at prestigious local schools, often with academic scholarships. Most pupils move on to their first choice of senior school when they leave St Francis. Beyond the classroom, they achieve highly in music, art, drama and sport in local competitions, tournaments and festivals. The quality of artwork around the school and of other performances during the inspection bears witness to this achievement. Pupils have also won a considerable number of awards in literacy in the local Eisteddfod, and a large number have passed speaking examinations at a high level.
- 3.3 Pupils display excellent skills of speaking and listening. They are attentive and thoughtful in class, ask pertinent questions, and are always ready to offer their views and opinions, expressing them clearly and persuasively. They are able to read and write fluently for a variety of purposes; consuming novels for enjoyment, while using the indexes and glossaries of non-fiction texts for research to find out information in, for example, their study of history. Pupils are able to write coherently at length as they produce imaginative stories or accurate factual accounts. Their mathematical skills are well developed and they are able to apply them across the curriculum, for example in producing graphs to show the outcomes of their practical experiments in science.
- 3.4 Pupils are confident users of ICT and enjoy finding out for themselves how to improve and refine their work. They have a good understanding of how to be safe online. Pupils develop valuable skills in other languages in their study of French, Spanish and Latin, and are willing to practise their accents and intonation before others. They enjoy physical exercise and understand the importance of being active, and express their creativity enthusiastically through music, drama and art.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations, based on the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books. This level of attainment, as judged, means that pupils make at least good and often excellent progress. Pupils with SEND have the confidence to participate fully in class and make good progress from their different starting points. This is because of the quality of their individual support, both in class and in their withdrawal groups, which is well co-ordinated.
- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils show exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They have eagerly embraced increased opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, and readily identify the key skills they hope to develop in their lessons. They are sensible in assessing the quality of their own work, and that of their classmates. Pupils have good work habits, being careful to present their work neatly and taking a pride in what they have achieved. They understand how to behave in class and respect the boundaries set by their teachers, so that no time is wasted in lessons establishing order.

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

- 3.7 The quality of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum provides ample opportunity for pupils of all abilities and needs and is in line with the school's aim of providing a stimulating curriculum which prepares pupils for their future education. It is enhanced by specialist teaching and additional subjects such as French from Nursery onwards, Latin from Year 6 and Spanish from Year 7. Provision in art and mathematics is particularly strong. The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' learning and achievements. Thorough curriculum planning ensures that pupils acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they require for the next stages of their learning. Pupils in Year 8 are exceptionally well prepared for their future schools, both socially and for their entrance examinations.
- 3.9 Grouping according to ability in English, mathematics, science and French in older year groups enables teaching to be much more focused on the pupils' differing capabilities. Curricular support for those requiring additional help is strong, and the systems for identifying and supporting such pupils work well. The co-ordinator for pupils with SEND liaises closely with form teachers and specialist staff, and pupils identified as needing support are given individual education plans (IEPs) which are well-monitored. Whilst their needs are met extremely effectively in one-to-one lessons, there is some inconsistency in the quality of support in other lessons. In the best lessons tasks tailored to meet different pupils' needs were evident across the whole ability range. Pupils identified by the school as being able, gifted and talented are offered good enrichment opportunities and regular mentoring sessions with a member of staff. A thorough programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been adopted by the school but its delivery has yet to be firmly embedded in the school curriculum.
- 3.10 The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. A wide variety of clubs is available, meeting the school's aim to offer a breadth of personal development through extra-curricular activities. Before-school, lunchtime and after-school clubs include Italian, yoga and eco-club, together with an impressive range of sporting and musical activities, such as hockey and hand bells. Pupil and parent questionnaires indicate a high level of satisfaction with the provision.
- 3.11 Links with the local community are excellent. The school supports a wide range of local and national charities. Pupils decide their own charities to support and they organise the fundraising events themselves, raising considerable sums in the process. There is a whole school link to a school in Uganda, with clothes having recently been donated there. Places of worship in the area such as synagogues and churches are visited. The school plays host to local primaries in sporting events. The curriculum is enriched by visitors, such as authors and staff from local museums. In addition, trips to a local war memorial, theatres and places of historic interest as well as residential trips, including to France and Wales, expand pupils' horizons. Pupils' participation in all of these activities benefits their education and their social and personal development.

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

- 3.12 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.13 The high quality teaching enables pupils to progress well and achieve excellent standards, reflecting the pupils' highly positive responses to questions about teaching in the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 3.14 The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The best planned activities provide opportunities for pupils to become independent and creative thinkers, as when they were challenged in an art lesson and responded with excellent outcomes. Occasionally, when there is less challenge and fewer opportunities to investigate independently, the pupils can become less focused. Many lessons involve a wide variety of activities and methods. Objectives are clear and, in the great majority of cases, pupils are kept fully engaged. Teaching moves quickly between activities, maintaining pupils' interest. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in a wide range of subjects. Excellent subject knowledge enables teachers to explain challenging ideas clearly, to devise carefully structured lessons and to act as excellent role models.
- 3.15 Teachers bring considerable commitment, vision and expectation to much of their work. They use questions extremely well to stimulate pupils' thinking and to challenge them to progress further; the most skilful questioning deepens pupils' understanding well.
- 3.16 Teachers show considerable awareness of how pupils are progressing and of their individual needs. They monitor progress carefully and adapt their teaching where necessary. In many lessons, detailed planning enables teachers to produce a range of tasks to suit differing abilities, helping all pupils to achieve their potential.
- 3.17 Teaching assistants are nearly always used extremely effectively to ensure equality of access, by providing additional support to pupils with SEND. These pupils say that they are very well supported, that teachers are well aware of their difficulties and that work is carefully tailored to their needs.
- 3.18 Since the previous inspection there has been a move away from the widespread use of worksheets and there is evidence of more independent work by the pupils. A recent focus on marking has had a positive impact and it is now generally of a high quality, recognising what pupils have achieved and helping them to see how to improve their work. The marking in mathematics is particularly impressive. In some subjects, there are still some inconsistencies of implementation and in the follow-up of targets set. When marking is less rigorous, pupils do not know what they must do to improve. The introduction of peer assessment enables pupils to share their work and has been well received. The school has a considerable amount of academic data on pupils and is at present developing an effective means of using this data to track pupil progress across the school.
- 3.19 The use of ICT is widespread across the school in all subjects. Particularly good results were seen in a Year 4 geography project on India. Classrooms are well equipped, and in some lessons the use of interactive whiteboards is excellent. Sometimes, though, their potential for enhancing learning is not fully utilised. Libraries are used well to foster enjoyment and a love of reading.

- 3.20 Teachers have very high expectations for pupils, and praise and encouragement are used to good effect. All staff know their pupils well and the excellent relationships are marked by mutual respect, creating an environment conducive to learning and resulting in exemplary behaviour from pupils in class.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. They are confident in their communications with their peers and with adults. They demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility for themselves and others in the school community. Year 8 pupils act as excellent buddies and mentors to younger pupils, and help to contribute to the social and moral development of those younger than themselves. Warm relationships exist amongst staff and pupils, and pupils are emotionally mature for their age.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual awareness and sense of self is excellent. Experiences in artistic, dramatic and musical activities give pupils excellent opportunities to explore and demonstrate their own developing spirituality. During assemblies pupils show very well their deeper understanding of their own sense of self and their growing spirituality through school collective worship. They demonstrate great pride for their school and there is a strong sense of community amongst the pupils across the age ranges. As a result of pupil requests via the school council, pupils have the chance to care for chickens and lambs, and younger pupils are very proud to collect the freshly laid eggs to be enjoyed within the school.
- 4.4 The moral development of pupils is excellent. They demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong. All year groups were instrumental in the development of the St Francis framework, which sets out a clear code for moral conduct within the school. A separate reward system is in place for behaviour, and pupils are proud to receive stars and wheatsheaves in recognition of their high moral conduct. Pupils have a firm understanding of the sanctions involved in the event of acts of unkindness towards others, thanks to the clearly explained warning card system.
- 4.5 The social awareness of pupils is excellent. Pupils treat one another with respect and sensitivity, and this is seen in written and verbal feedback by pupils, as part of the recent development of peer assessment. During break times, playground monitors help to promote a sense of school community, along with care and consideration for one another. Pupils are proud to be given numerous opportunities to take on leadership roles and positions of responsibility. Prefects are selected in Year 8, and monitors and form captains with varying responsibilities are chosen on rotation further down the school. There is a school council where pupils can put themselves forward for election to be selected by the form tutor. The members of the council are most conscientious in their work, seeking matters to raise from their peers and then reporting back on the outcome. The pupils contribute to a variety of charities through various activities, and in Year 8 develop and organise their own fund raising activity. Pupils gain good political awareness through activities such as mock elections and visits from Members of Parliament. The recently introduced 'learning for life' programme and scheme of work is intended to ensure further development of their social, economic and political awareness.
- 4.6 The cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils show a good understanding of faiths other than their own and have opportunities to visit places of worship from a variety of religions. Cross-curricular cultural weeks mean that pupils focus on and deepen their understanding of specific countries and cultures, chosen

for their particular year group, and seen, for example, in recent work on Italy. They explore and represent every aspect of life for that particular culture through art, food, clothes and language.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 Staff provide highly effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims, contributing to excellent personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are respectful, caring and trusting and help to contribute to the happy, friendly school environment. The school has an excellent pastoral system. This includes a weekly review system plus a detailed personal folder which tracks pupils throughout their time at school. This ensures they are well cared for and treated as individuals. Pupils' 'talk books' enable them to convey personal concerns to staff. Pupils welcome and use this system effectively. The further development of form time through the 'learning for life' programme is intended to further enhance the pastoral programme across the school.
- 4.9 Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Lunches are nutritious and plentiful, and offer a healthy, balanced meal with good choice. Pupils benefit from regular exercise through games and physical education (PE), as well as through extra-curricular clubs and outward bound activities.
- 4.10 The school is highly effective in promoting excellent behaviour. Pupils were found to be extremely courteous to adults and to one another. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of parents expressed concern about the way the school deals with cases of bullying. Inspection evidence shows that the school has robust and sensitive procedures for managing bullying and developing positive behaviour. Pupils reported that this type of behaviour is rare and clear systems are in place to deal with incidents effectively. Some pupils in their questionnaires felt that rewards and sanctions were unfair. The comprehensive system of dots and minuses for sanctions, and house points and stars for rewards was found to be fair, clear and transparent.
- 4.11 The school has excellent systems to support pupils with SEND through detailed individual education plans and has excellent communications with their parents. A detailed and thorough action plan ensures suitable educational access for such pupils.
- 4.12 The school council provides excellent opportunities for views to be sought from pupils. Some pupils who commented in pupil questionnaires felt that their opinions were not sought or responded to, although pupils who were interviewed were able to describe examples, which were seen to have been acted upon.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of the arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.14 Records for this aspect of the school's work are exceptionally well maintained. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and accurately reflects current practice. Training is undertaken regularly by all staff in accordance with regulatory requirements. Personnel involved in the appointment of staff have received

appropriate training in the correct procedures for safer recruitment. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards and regular fire practices are held. High quality records are efficiently stored and maintained for this.

- 4.15 Health and safety procedures are excellent, with thorough policies and risk assessments in place. Relevant staff are efficiently informed of any health and safety matters arising, and issues are quickly resolved. Weekly and monthly checks are carried out, along with regular health and safety meetings and regular staff training. Suitable provision is made for pupils who become ill, in appropriate accommodation, cared for by staff with the required first aid training. Accidents are reported effectively. Staff are well informed about pupils' individual medical needs and conditions. High quality medical records are well maintained. The admission and attendance registers are of high quality, and are properly completed, meticulously maintained and correctly stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors are extremely successful in ensuring that the school meets its aims, giving its pupils an excellent all-round education and preparing them to move on to their chosen senior school. Governors are very efficient in the way in which they keep an overview of the school's activities, through their well-organised committee system. During the recent period of change, they have provided invaluable support to senior leaders, and they have spent their money wisely in recruiting high calibre staff capable of bringing stability to the school and moving it forward.
- 5.3 The governing body takes its responsibilities seriously and works effectively alongside the school to make sure that it meets its legal duties. The governors' annual review of safeguarding and child protection is extremely thorough, and governors are regularly involved in checking the compliance of the school's policies and procedures, making recommendations for improvement where appropriate. As a result, the school complies fully with all regulations.
- 5.4 Governors bring to their role a wide range of experience and expertise. They attend training regularly, and all have undertaken child protection training. They have been fully involved with senior leaders in formulating the new strategic development plan designed to move the school into the next phase of its growth.

### **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 and carers, is excellent.
- 5.6 Leaders at all levels give excellent direction to the school, enabling it to meet its aims very successfully. They ensure that the school's policies are effectively implemented in practice. Arrangements for child protection are very efficiently and carefully organised, so that pupils are fully safeguarded at all times.
- 5.7 Since the previous inspection, the school's senior management team has completely changed as leaders have moved on or retired. The senior management team bring energy, drive and determination to the school, and set an excellent example to staff in its practice. Senior leaders have carried the staff with them, thanks to their inclusive approach to consult and involve staff in planning for the future. There is a strong sense of teamwork, an enthusiasm for change, and a common sense of purpose throughout the school.
- 5.8 The school has improved in many aspects of its work since the previous inspection, and much has been achieved in a short period of time. The clear direction provided by the senior team is evident in the increased focus on pupils taking more responsibility for their own learning, working independently, and assessing for themselves how well they are achieving. This is proving very successful as it becomes established across the school. Effective new systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have been introduced, through systematic work

scrutiny and observation of lessons carried out by senior leaders, subject leaders and colleagues.

- 5.9 The school has worked in a considered way at devising a long-term strategic development plan to give it structure and purpose over the next five years. The plan has been carefully constructed to reflect appropriate priorities suggested by the whole school community, and has reached the stage of being finalised with targets, tasks, responsibilities and budgets. It is intended as the next step in the school's drive for improvement.
- 5.10 High-quality appointments and a focus on the performance management and continuing professional development of staff are paying dividends in the classroom and are reflected in the quality of teaching and learning. The appraisal system works well, and training for staff ensures that they are well equipped to meet the diverse needs of their pupils. All staff have completed the required training for child protection and safeguarding, and large numbers are qualified in first aid. Staff feel that their own professional needs are well met, and that they have the confidence, the time and the support to carry out their responsibilities competently.
- 5.11 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. The very strong partnership that is developed with parents of the youngest children is maintained as pupils progress through the school. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that the overwhelming majority of parents are extremely positive and enthusiastic about the school and would recommend it to others. Parents are particularly appreciative of the fact their children are happy and very well cared for. A high number reported that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.12 Communication with parents is very strong and they are welcomed to a wide variety of school events. A comprehensive website, school prospectus and parents' handbooks provide all current parents and prospective parents with detailed information about the school. They appreciate the personal approach the school offers. Parents enjoy the regular newsletters, the weekly updates and frequent copies of 'The Harvest' magazine that report on and celebrate all the many activities that take place. The headmaster's open door policy is appreciated. The leadership team and all teaching staff are available at the beginning and end of every day, so that parents can easily approach them to raise concerns or queries. As a result the vast majority can be dealt with swiftly and informally. Equally, staff can be contacted by email and always respond promptly.
- 5.13 Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress through regular parents' consultations, annual reports for Years 1 and 2, and twice yearly reports in Years 3 to 8. Since the previous inspection, reports have become consistently clear and more helpful to parents.
- 5.14 The newly formed, yet very active friends' association organises a variety of fund-raising and social events. The success of these events has enabled many valuable resources to be purchased and a significant contribution has been made to the new adventure playground.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

6.1 The setting makes good provision to meet the needs of the range of children who attend. Well-planned educational programmes provide many opportunities for all children, including those with SEND, to make substantial progress. Enthusiastic staff support learning well: they pose appropriate questions, build on children's ideas and foster good communication skills. There are, however, some inconsistencies in how effectively the children are stimulated and challenged. Relevant observations and assessments are regularly made to inform planning. The recently introduced records of achievement, or learning journeys, track children's progress clearly. Teaching assistants are utilised effectively. The suitable range of indoor resources, together with a good balance of adult-led and child initiated activities enable children to respond well to the high expectations of staff. The setting has identified the need for further development of the outdoor areas and ICT to give greater opportunities for challenging learning. Specialist teachers in music, French and PE enhance the curriculum further. Staff work closely with parents, enabling children to settle quickly and happily into school. Parents are highly involved in their children's learning and achievements through the setting's open door policy, regular progress reports and parents' consultations. The required checks for two-year-olds have been effectively implemented and the information shared with parents.

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

6.2 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Thorough policies underpin excellent practice, enabling all children to feel safe and secure. Dedicated staff and generous ratios mean all children are very well known and extremely well cared for, including those under three and those with SEND. The newly introduced 'key person' system promotes the high standards of behaviour and courtesy expected, and this is regularly rewarded and celebrated. All staff act as excellent role models so that children know how to play co-operatively and imaginatively as they explore their surroundings. High priority is given to the children's happiness and health and safety. Risk assessments and fire procedures are robust. The youngest children showed awareness of keeping themselves safe at nature school, for example. They are all encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and develop good hygiene routines. Transitions within the setting and beyond are sensitively managed and ensure all children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

6.3 Leadership and management are good. The cohesive team share a clear ambitious vision for the continuing progress of the EYFS, particularly the development of the outside learning environment and the use of ICT. The children's well-being and safeguarding are central to all that the school does, and are enhanced by thorough risk assessments and fire procedures. All staff have received the necessary training in child protection procedures and have been appropriately checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service. The governors take a keen interest in the EYFS and have an excellent understanding of the requirements. They fulfil their obligations in the monitoring of policies and procedures. Managers support staff well

through the recently introduced supervision arrangements and appraisals, and training needs are identified. Excellent partnerships have been established with parents and with external agencies, contributing greatly to the achievements of all children. Key people work hard to promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere, and good teamwork contributes greatly to the progress and development of all children.

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

- 6.4 The overall quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Children of all abilities and needs make good progress in relation to their starting points because of the encouragement and support they receive. By the end of Reception most children successfully reach the early learning goals and some exceed these expectations. The children generally express themselves clearly and confidently in their conversations and listen attentively. The youngest children in the Nursery are beginning to co-operate in their play and enjoy books. Reception children display an increasing knowledge of letters and the sounds they make, which the children use well when reading and writing. They work confidently with numbers to twenty and are developing good fine motor skills, seen in their cutting and writing. The personal development of all children is excellent and they feel safe and secure. The youngest children share toys and are beginning to understand about taking turns. They go on to gain high levels of independence by the end of Reception. The children readily trust the adults in the setting who effectively safeguard their welfare. Much progress has been made since the previous inspection and now all staff are involved in evaluation and planning for future developments. It is clear the setting is committed to continuous improvement.

#### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**