



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION WELLINGBOROUGH PRE-PREPARATORY AND PREPARATORY SCHOOLS

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wellingborough Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory Schools

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

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| Full Name of School | Wellingborough Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory Schools | | |
| DfE Number | 928/6010 | | |
| Registered Charity Number | 1101485 | | |
| Address | Wellingborough Preparatory School Irthlingborough Road Wellingborough Northamptonshire NN8 2BX | | |
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| Email Address | mlr@wellingboroughschool.org prep-head@wellingboroughschool.org | | |
| Head | Pre-Preparatory: Miss Jocelyn Everett Prep: Mr R Mitchell | | |
| Chair of Governors | Dr J K Cox | | |
| Age Range | 3 to 13 | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 440 | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (249 boys; 191 girls) | | |
| Numbers by Age | 3-5 (EYFS): | 45 | 5-11: 249 |
| | 11-13 | 146 | |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 440 | |
| EYFS Gender | Mixed | | |
| Inspection Dates | 21 Jan 2014 to 24 Jan 2014 | | |

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 March 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, 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.

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', '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 representative 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 Linda Donowho

Mrs Hilary Betty

Rev Christopher Cann

Mr Richard James Hester

Mrs Carolyn (Jane) Scott

Mrs Jenny Clayphan

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Senior Mistress, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)

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Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wellingborough Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory School form part of the larger Wellingborough School which was founded in 1595. The preparatory and pre-preparatory schools were established in 1913 and 1990 respectively. The school became fully co-educational in the 1970s. The two schools are located on the outskirts of Wellingborough in Northamptonshire and in close proximity to each other, on the same site as the senior school. Since the previous inspection the preparatory school has created a new art facility know as the Art Atrium The pre-preparatory school includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children aged from three to five years, and pupils up to the age of eight. The preparatory school provides for pupils up to thirteen years of age. The family of schools is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Additionally, the school has a wholly owned subsidiary trading company, which has its own board, together with a council of which all governors are members. The council represents the members of the company and meets once per year. Members of the council also sit on governors' sub-committees and its members are either co-opted or nominated by bodies, including universities and local authorities.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 440 pupils on roll, of which 249 were boys and 191 girls. There were 144 pupils in the pre-preparatory school, of whom 45 were in the (EYFS) and there were 296 pupils in the preparatory school. The pupils come predominantly from business and professional families. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and a small proportion represents a range of other nationalities and cultures. The school has identified 79 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 57 of whom receive additional support. Five pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), one of whom receives additional support. The majority of pupils transfer to the senior school at age thirteen. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, although with a wide spread of abilities represented. Most pupils are of at least above average ability, with a notable proportion in some cohorts well above average.
- 1.3 The school has an overall mission statement, supported by aims, which cover the whole of Wellingborough School. These indicate that the school seeks to encourage its pupils to make the most of the opportunities that are provided, whilst achieving their best in the classroom and developing a healthy respect for others and themselves. It aims to enrich pupils' cultural experiences and engender values and a sense of right or wrong. It strives to provide pre-preparatory pupils with a broad-based, positive and happy start and for this to be built on as the pupils move to the preparatory school through a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum in a caring community in which every member of the school community should feel valued and respected.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils throughout both schools, including those in the EYFS, attain extremely well and make excellent progress in their learning because of a wide-ranging and vibrant curriculum and programme of activities, both inside and outside the school. The pupils' achievements are particularly notable in mathematics, literacy, art and information and communication technology (ICT) and the high level of skills attained in these areas are used well across the curriculum. All pupils benefit from excellent teaching methods which are particularly effective in motivating and enthusing pupils and which consistently include cross-curricular activities. Teachers across all year groups skilfully challenge pupils to think for themselves and collaborate with each other. There is a strong emphasis on extra-curricular activities which complement the curriculum very well and allow pupils to flourish. The provision for those pupils with SEND and for particularly able pupils is excellent. Marking and assessment policies have been reviewed since the previous inspection and pupils use the targets set for them to improve their learning. A consistent system to track pupils' progress is now in place across both schools and a means of centrally compiling data is in its early stages of development.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent and a major strength of the school. Pupils enjoy their life in the school and have fun. From the EYFS upwards pupils of all ages have a clear sense of right and wrong and behave in a mutually supportive way, demonstrating excellent social skills and trust in, and affection for, the school and its values. Pupils have a good appreciation of the less tangible aspects of life. They are given many opportunities for responsibilities and accept these with enthusiasm and pride. The provision for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils is strong and effectively supports the outstanding personal development of the pupils. A small number of pupils in both interviews and the pupils' questionnaire, commented that the school did not listen to and respond their opinions, but inspection evidence showed that there were many opportunities for pupils to express their views, although there was a lack of communication between the school and pupils with regard to the school's response to their ideas.
- 2.3 The aims of the school are fulfilled and fostered by the governing body, which is committed to the academic progress and personal development of the pupils. Governors have a clear oversight of the school, informed by the reports from the heads and through the regular meetings of the sub-committees. In the past governors have not had sufficient oversight of their responsibilities regarding the recruitment of staff and references have not always been received before the appropriate date. Leadership in both the pre-preparatory and preparatory school is excellent, providing a clear vision for the schools with a strong emphasis on the curriculum, teaching and learning. The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed well since the previous inspection to enable them to have both a clear oversight of their subjects and ensure a close liaison between the schools. This enables a seamless transition for pupils as they move through the family of schools. Links with parents are excellent. They are positive about most aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision. A small number expressed concern regarding the homework pupils were given and the school's response to potential instances of bullying. However, inspectors found that arrangements in both schools to safeguard against bullying were excellent. They also found that the policy on homework was not always clear to both pupils and parents.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- Ensure that all staff checks, including the taking up of references, are completed before they start work and accurately recorded in the single central register [Part 3 paragraph 7(a) and (b) under Welfare, health and safety].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Review the school's policy on homework and ensure that both pupils and parents fully understand teachers' expectations.
 2. Ensure that pupils are given sufficient information or explanation as to the school's response to their opinions and suggestions.
 3. Ensure that staff receive regular training in fire procedures and attendance is recorded for monitoring purposes.
 4. In the EYFS continue to investigate and implement ways to ensure that all children in the Reception classes have equal opportunities to play and investigate outdoors.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement is excellent.
- 3.2 The school successfully fulfils its aim to encourage its pupils to achieve their best in the classroom and make the most of the many opportunities which it provides. In both schools there is a keen focus on developing pupils' literacy skills to an extremely high standard. In the EYFS, all children are confident and enjoy the activities. There is a strong focus on phonics and from a very early age, children begin to recognise simple words and incorporate them into their writing. In Reception, children recognise and use phonic knowledge with speed and a high degree of accuracy. They talk, make suggestions, and listen carefully to their teachers. In the pre-preparatory school, pupils are confident and articulate. They relish talking with adults, asking appropriate questions and giving considered and interesting answers. The continued strong focus on phonics ensures enthusiastic reading of a high standard. Pupils' excellent writing reflects these skills and examples of high-quality writing for many purposes are displayed throughout the school. The preparatory school successfully builds on these skills; pupils read intelligently, and write fluently and with considerable sensitivity for a variety of purposes and audiences. In lessons, interviews and informal conversations, pupils' observed input was open and interesting. They are eloquent when answering questions and presenting their ideas, and when working in pairs or small groups. Pupils discuss information in a mature way, listening to the ideas of others and adapting their original viewpoint as they feel necessary. This practice is encouraged throughout the school.
- 3.3 Pupils develop considerable understanding of mathematics. They show a strong grasp of mathematical concepts and work with confidence and skill when investigating mathematical problems. In the Nursery, children count confidently to ten and have an understanding of pairs and groups of three. Reception children work confidently with numbers up to twenty and beyond and use their knowledge to work with data when compiling a graph. Pupils of all ages have well-developed ICT skills that they use creatively across the curriculum. Pupils' logical thought in science is excellent and from a young age they engage with enthusiasm in scientific investigation.
- 3.4 Pupils' creative skills are excellent; in the EYFS, children are keen to join in activities, concentrate for lengthy periods and start to be creative. Across both schools, work in art shows exceptional creativity and technique, and dramatic and musical skills are developed well through opportunities for each year group to take part in a production. The majority of pupils transfer to the senior school at age thirteen, some gaining scholarships.
- 3.5 Less able pupils and those with SEND make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported across the schools. They are withdrawn from lessons for individual work if appropriate and are regularly supported in class by their teacher or classroom assistants as appropriate. More able pupils, and those with particular talents, are well catered for in lessons and in the challenge classes provided for them. In both the pre-preparatory and the preparatory school, pupils benefit greatly when the classes are divided particularly for mathematics and literacy, so enabling all pupils' particular needs to be met.

- 3.6 Beyond the classroom pupils achieve well in a broad range of contexts, including musical events and examinations, drama productions, and sporting activities against other schools. An inclusive approach ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND, have opportunities to represent their school.
- 3.7 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available, from observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with individual pupils, it is judged to be excellent. Results in standardised tests of attainment indicate that pupils achieve results in reading and spelling that are higher than national norms. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make at least good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. In the EYFS all children make rapid progress in relation to their starting points. Children enter the Nursery with attainment at broadly expected levels, and by the end of Reception most children have achieved the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning and some children exceed them.
- 3.8 The application of pupils to their work is exceptionally good in nearly all lessons, supporting their achievement very effectively. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary and pupils of all ages enjoy their work.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curricular provision in both schools is rich in content, balanced, exciting and suitable for pupils of all ages and abilities. It strongly supports the school's aims to give its pupils a broad-based and happy start to their education, with a strong academic grounding, enabling them to make the most of the many opportunities provided.
- 3.11 The curriculum promotes challenge and excellence, and is sympathetically planned to meet the developing success criteria and needs of the pupils as they progress through the school. In the EYFS, the quality of provision for children of all abilities is excellent. The extremely well-planned programmes ensure that the children have a range of rich experiences with appropriate activities. They have opportunities to talk and make suggestions, to listen, develop physical skills and to work both independently and with staff. There is a good balance between activities led and directed by adults and those which children devise and extend for themselves. There are daily opportunities for children to work and to play both indoors and outside. Although provision has improved since the last inspection, the school is still experimenting with ways to ensure that both Reception classes have equal access to a similar range of opportunities outdoors.
- 3.12 For older pupils, efficient timetabling enables them to experience a curriculum which goes beyond requirements. It includes drama, life skills, and a wide range of linguistic opportunities. Specialist teaching increases as the pupils progress through the schools. From Years 1 to Year 3 pupils are supported by class-based teaching and benefit from specialist teaching for games, music, ICT and art. Additional specialist teaching from Year 4 enhances the curriculum for those in the preparatory school. Further breadth is added for Years 7 and 8 though the extension of modern foreign languages, with the addition of Latin or Spanish.
- 3.13 The division of classes in some literacy and numeracy lessons in the pre-preparatory classes, from Year 4 in mathematics and in some areas of English and from Year 5 in other areas of English, allows pupils to work at a level appropriate to their abilities.

In Year 8 a class for potential scholars is created, providing them with more advanced and challenging work. The size of this class has flexibility from year to year to ensure that the needs of pupils are met. Curricular support for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent. Clear targets are set in personal plans which allow these pupils to receive appropriate and accessible work ensuring that their needs are met in individual lessons and with appropriate support in mainstream lessons. Pupils value the intervention and support given.

- 3.14 There is a seamless progression between the pre-preparatory and the preparatory school. The sharing of good professional practice, together with more effective planning between subject staff, has ensured greater parity of curriculum content across subject departments and year groups. Subject co-ordinators take responsibility for ensuring that schemes of work are regularly reviewed and updated, and cross-curricular work is a strong feature throughout both schools. Since the previous inspection, the development of the creative curriculum which embraces active learning has ensured that all subjects are more accessible and enjoyable with a greater variety of activities reflected in lessons and displays.
- 3.15 The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by an excellent range of diverse and vibrant extra-curricular activities, internal workshops, and day and residential trips, all of which are viewed by both pupils and parents as being of high quality. The programme of extra-curricular activities takes place at various times every day, including Saturdays, and includes mathematics puzzle club, various music ensembles, choirs and orchestras, wildlife habitats, fun club, ICT and challenge clubs for the particularly able. Since the previous inspection the range has increased in the pre-preparatory department with all staff, including teaching assistants, embracing this important dimension of the school day.
- 3.16 The school has developed excellent links with the local community. All pupils have opportunities to participate in various activities with local schools and organisations. For example, the Year 8 pupils organise a sports day for children from a local special school as part of their leadership programme. The Young Voices choir from the preparatory school recently joined 600 other children at a singing event in Birmingham. The school hosts an annual football and netball event for twelve local primary schools and various local and national organisations make regular use of the school sporting facilities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching in both the pre-preparatory and the preparatory school is excellent.
- 3.18 Throughout both schools, teachers have established an excellent rapport with their pupils and work hard to ensure that they achieve in line with the school's aims. This, together with the staff's excellent subject knowledge, contributes greatly to the good progress pupils make.
- 3.19 In the most successful lessons, planning for pupils' different needs is central to success. In the EYFS, staff have an excellent specialist knowledge, and focused observations are used to guide daily planning and identify the next steps for learning for each child. Children have a range of rich experiences which gives opportunities for them to talk and make suggestions, listen, develop physical skills and to work both independently and with staff. There is a consistency in the method of lesson planning across the school. Most of the teaching has a brisk pace with teachers

skilfully questioning pupils to challenge their thinking. In both schools opportunities are routinely provided for investigation and collaborative tasks. Peer discussion and review are used well to support and develop pupils' understanding and skills.

- 3.20 Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and praise and encouragement are used effectively. In the EYFS, assessment arrangements have been thoroughly evaluated so that a highly effective system feeds into planning which is extremely detailed, flexible and appropriate. The quality of assessment throughout the pre-preparatory and preparatory school is excellent and the pupils' attainment is regularly checked in order to identify those who are achieving well in relation to their ability and those who require extra support. Consequently, pupils with SEND or EAL in need of additional help are well supported. All class teachers identify these pupils on a regular basis and ensure that they are able to offer assistance easily whenever it is needed.
- 3.21 Since the previous inspection, the preparatory school has developed a new marking policy. The marking of pupils' work is generally excellent, with realistic targets for improvement set and 'progress mark' stickers are used to show that corrections have been successfully completed. Target setting is also evident in both schools, with pupils using their targets in order to improve. Tracking of pupils' progress throughout the schools is now being carried out but the compilation of data is in its early stages of development. Homework is regularly given to support learning, although a number of pupils and parents in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and also pupils in interviews raised concerns regarding homework tasks and the lack of clear expectations. Inspectors agreed that there is a lack of clarity with regard to the homework policy.
- 3.22 Resources for pupils to use in classrooms are plentiful and of high quality. Teachers use these resources extremely well to support their pupils' learning and to motivate them and maintain their interest. Interactive whiteboards are readily available and are used effectively to help produce lively lessons. Across both schools pupils display extremely positive attitudes towards learning and a genuine desire to meet the teachers' expectations.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The personal qualities of the pupils develop extremely well and are central to the aims of the schools. In the EYFS, children show excellent personal development and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They arrive happily at school, feel safe and are confident to share concerns with any member of staff. Pupils of all ages are reflective, focused, compassionate, open-minded and caring. They work together in harmony developing a sense of responsibility for others and the wider world.
- 4.3 In both the pre-preparatory and the preparatory school, pupils have good spiritual awareness. In the pre-preparatory school the pupils are confident and self-aware and are able to think independently about their own needs and those of others. These qualities are equally evident in the preparatory school, where pupils' confidence and self-esteem are high. Pupils are emotionally mature, discuss issues in a balanced way and pay due regard to differing points of view. Achievements are valued and celebrated in class and in assemblies, although opportunities for reflection to allow pupils to appreciate the non-material aspects of life are not fully explored.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development in both schools is excellent. From an early age pupils begin to show the attitudes and qualities needed to make responsible moral decisions and put them into practice. The Golden Rules in the pre-preparatory school and the code of conduct in the preparatory school, supported by the chaplain's weekly assemblies, help provide the pupils with a strong sense of right and wrong. The integration of the 'Habits of Mind philosophy' into the life skills programme encourages pupils to take more ownership of their actions. Older pupils display mature and tolerant attitudes when thinking of the needs of others. For example, Year 7 and 8 pupils could empathise with the needs of the blind when planning a charity event in support of Guide Dogs for the Blind. Pupils in both schools understand the importance of good behaviour and have a clear appreciation of rules and boundaries; consequently, pupils' behaviour in both schools is exemplary. They speak with pride about the kindness and courtesy which make it such a welcoming community. They are able to express cogently the important link between beliefs and actions, as was evident in a Year 6 religious education lesson on Buddhism.
- 4.5 The strong sense of community fostered throughout the school develops pupils' excellent social awareness; all pupils are responsible, caring and polite. They enjoy a range of opportunities to take on roles of responsibility. In pre-preparatory, all Year 3 pupils have the opportunity to be a librarian, class leader or a member of the school council. In the preparatory school roles of responsibility are mostly reserved for older pupils who can be appointed anti-bullying ambassadors, club leaders or represent their peers on the charities committee, and all age groups are represented on the school council. Pupils gain an effective understanding of local and national institutions through visits and current affairs discussions. They contribute to the wider community by supporting charitable activities and by organising a sports day for younger children in a local special educational needs school as part of their Year 8 leadership programme.

- 4.6 Cultural development is excellent and pupils show a keen understanding and respect for a variety of different faiths and cultures. Pre-preparatory pupils have learned about school life in Cambodia from sponsoring a little girl, and Year 4 has studied the Adivasi tribe. An extensive range of educational visits at home and abroad help pupils deepen respect for other cultures and faiths, while also developing an appreciation and understanding of their own history.
- 4.7 By the time that they leave both the pre-preparatory and the preparatory school, the pupils' personal development ensures that they are very well prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Both schools have a highly effective pastoral structure which strongly fulfils the aim to promote good relationships so that every member of the school community feels valued and respected.
- 4.10 The personal development of the pupils is fostered by outstanding support and guidance from the staff. Efficient procedures work extremely well to nurture and bring out the best in each individual while ensuring that concerns are dealt with promptly and trends are tracked. The school counsellor and the well-being practitioner enhance this provision. Pupils much appreciate the fact that they are well cared for and the relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst pupils across the age ranges are of a high quality and based on mutual respect and support.
- 4.11 Both schools strongly support pupils' good health. In the EYFS, children understand the importance of physical exercise, which food is healthy, and the benefits of good hygiene as a means of staying well. Throughout the schools, pupils enjoy frequent opportunities for exercise both in and out of lessons and make full use of the extensive facilities and equipment in the grounds. Pupils have a clear understanding of the requirements for a balanced diet and the school food is appetising, healthy and nutritious.
- 4.12 Clear staff guidance on behaviour ensures close adherence to the Golden Rules and the expected code of conduct, which promotes extremely high standards. In the EYFS, staff expect high standards of behaviour, co-operation and respect for others and foster children's ability to be increasingly independent. Fully embedded policies and procedures reinforce the school ethos of respect and responsibility and guard against bullying. Pupils know that they can ask for support from any member of staff. Trained anti-bullying ambassadors from Year 8 on duty in the preparatory school playground are able to use early intervention to help diffuse potentially difficult situations.
- 4.13 A small number of parents, and one or two pupils, expressed concerns regarding bullying but pupils in discussion with inspectors reported that on the very rare occasions that bullying occurs it is dealt with efficiently. In consequence inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. The system of rewards and sanctions is fully understood by all pupils and sanctions are used constructively, taking account of pupils with SEND. Despite some negative feedback in the pre-inspection questionnaire responses, preparatory pupils in interview agreed that the system was fair, although the staff were not always consistent when awarding pluses and minuses. This opinion was not upheld by all age groups.

- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.15 A small minority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their opinions were not always asked for or responded to. The inspection team found that pupils' views are aired formally through representation on both councils; however, pupils in the preparatory school are not always aware of the school's response.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.17 The well-being of pupils is central to both schools' aims and their procedures for ensuring this contribute to the happiness of the pupils. Effective day-to-day attention is paid to safeguarding pupils and promoting their health and well-being. The school's child protection policy has been recently updated and is now compliant in content. The school makes provision for regular training in child protection for all staff. Safeguarding procedures are now robust and are implemented effectively; all the required checks have been made on staff. However, historically a small number of references have been received after the required date.
- 4.18 Health and safety procedures are well organised and risk assessments cover all aspects of school life. Effective measures are in place to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, procedures are practised regularly and efficient records kept. Records on staff training on fire procedures are not available in a form to allow effective oversight. Appropriate general risk assessments around the extensive school grounds ensure that safety is a priority. In support of this, since the previous inspection the system for handling traffic flow has been completely revised and the school has become a traffic-free environment. Any health and safety concerns are quickly recorded centrally and acted upon by the estates management. Termly whole-school health and safety committee meetings discuss any issues and necessary action is taken.
- 4.19 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils are excellent. Staff are very well informed about individual needs and conditions, and the medical centre makes comfortable provision for pupils who are ill. The school nurses are available when needed and many staff are trained in first aid.
- 4.20 Registration of pupils is methodical, with absence followed up quickly, and the school correctly maintains attendance registers and an appropriate admission register.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 Governance has enabled the school to make effective progress in all areas. The board benefits from a wide range of experience and professional backgrounds, to ensure the most appropriate mix of skills. The board has a clearly defined structure, and effective and supportive sub-committees. Governors provide strong support and are committed to the aims and purposes of the school. Regular minuted meetings ensure that governors are well informed and able to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall strategic planning, educational standards, development and management of the school. The induction programme for new governors ensures they have a good knowledge of the school and its policies. Governors have a clear insight into the working of the school. The regular report from both schools, the presence of staff on the sub-committees and presentations by staff on curriculum matters, provides comprehensive information on all aspects of school life.
- 5.3 Relationships between governors and staff are enhanced by the regular visits made by governors to the school, a particular governor's involvement in extra-curricular activities, and opportunities for staff to meet governors informally. They provide the school leaders with help, advice and challenge, whilst recognising their operational autonomy.
- 5.4 Governors are committed to the school, its pupils and staff, and to its continuing development, and have a clear understanding of their roles. They carefully monitor and evaluate the overall provision to ensure continued improvement. The governing body recognises its responsibilities for child protection and health and safety. School policies are monitored and reviewed appropriately. However, in the past, governance has not ensured that due attention has been given to all of the statutory requirements in relation to the recruitment of staff, such as ensuring that references are received prior to all employees starting work. This oversight has now been rectified.

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

- 5.5 Leadership and management, including links with parents and others, are excellent.
- 5.6 In both the pre-preparatory and the preparatory school, the quality of leadership and management is excellent and successfully fulfils the schools' aims. Structures and routines are clear, comprehensive and well communicated. Staff are supportive of, and supported by, the leadership teams, and feel valued and that their opinions matter. The leadership is committed to improving quality, particularly in the curriculum and teaching and learning, whilst keeping the fulfilment of the school's aims firmly in focus. To this end, many initiatives have been undertaken with the thorough backing of all staff. The strengths in leadership are reflected in high academic standards, excellent teaching and pupils' outstanding personal development. Since the previous inspection, links between the pre-prep and the preparatory school and senior school have been greatly strengthened. The leadership teams meet regularly and links between curriculum coordinators in the

pre-preparatory and subject leaders in the preparatory school result in more cohesion and continuity.

- 5.7 Leaders at all levels are focused in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. In both schools, including the EYFS, development plans are produced on the basis of wide consultation and well-prepared subject development plans. Staff in both schools are committed to their implementation. Communication and consultation are purposeful and informative, and enable all staff to make their views known and to contribute to policy and practice. The school pays careful attention to the development of all staff and a comprehensive appraisal system is in place.
- 5.8 Since the previous inspection, the role of the subject coordinators in the pre-preparatory school has been strengthened and they now monitor the content and planning of their subjects more effectively. In both schools more emphasis is being placed on tracking pupils, scrutiny of their work, marking and formal and informal assessment across all subject areas. In addition, excellent pastoral care by the heads of the two schools ensures continuity as pupils progress through the school.
- 5.9 The school's leadership is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating a high-quality staff. The school ensures that all members of staff are effectively trained for their roles in safeguarding the pupils' welfare, health and safety. A comprehensive staff handbook gives them useful guidance, and good induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements. Management within both schools, exercises effective responsibility for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their welfare. Policies and procedures for the appointment of staff are well developed and implemented, and the flaws in the recruitment process with regard to a small number of late references have now been addressed. Staff are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety.
- 5.10 From the EYFS onwards, the school has developed strong links with parents. Parents are very happy with the welcome and support the EYFS gives them and their children. They appreciate the sense of community and continuity, and feel that great attention is paid to creating strong relationships and to the quality of their children's learning. Throughout the school parents feel they are well informed about what goes on in school and give valuable support to their children's learning at home. There is a supportive partnership between home and school and staff are approachable and quick to respond to queries. The school website and prospectus provide current and prospective parents with a good introduction to its aims and ethos. The handbooks provide them with comprehensive information about daily routines. Additionally, the regular newsletters keep parents extremely well informed about events, pupils' learning experiences and achievements. Information about pupils' academic achievement and progress as well as their personal development is clearly set out in well-produced and detailed reports. The best of these reports provide targets for children to work towards in the following term. Procedures have been improved to ensure that parents' views are attended to speedily if a problem arises, and parents are aware of the formal complaints' procedure should a serious problem occur.
- 5.11 Parents are pleased with the opportunities they are given to become involved in the life of the schools. Parents give good levels of support to the schools for events such as sports fixtures, drama productions and concerts. They are also welcome to join the highly successful School Gospel Choir which has 70 members, including

many members of staff. Mothers belong to a rapidly growing school-sponsored golf group and a sailing group. There are highly active Parents Associations in each school which organise numerous social events in aid of school funds.

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