

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Woodlands Preparatory School

October 2018



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School's Details

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----|----------------|----|
| School | Woodlands Preparatory School | | | |
| DfE number | 881/6026 | | | |
| EY registration | EY439501 | | | |
| Address | Woodlands Preparatory School Warley Street Great Warley Brentwood Essex CM13 3LA | | | |
| Telephone number | 01277 233288 | | | |
| Email address | info@woodlandsschools.co.uk | | | |
| Headteacher | Mr David Bell | | | |
| Chairman/Proprietor | Mr Ken Lewis | | | |
| Age range | 3 months to 11 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 163 | | | |
| | Boys | 98 | Girls | 65 |
| | EYFS | 59 | Infants | 43 |
| | Juniors | 61 | | |
| Inspection dates | 02 to 04 October 2018 | | | |

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Woodlands Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from three months to eleven years. It is owned by the proprietor and his family, who maintain regular communication with the headteacher. The school is situated on a nine-acre site on the outskirts of Great Warley village, which is part of Brentwood in Essex. The school has been established for almost forty years. A sister school, Woodlands Hutton Manor, was founded in 2001. Changes to the school since the previous inspection include a new all-weather pitch, upgraded swimming facilities and the creation of a parents' association.
- 1.2 Children enter the Nursery from the age of three months. They transfer to the main school in the term following their third birthday. The main school is divided into three sections: foundation stage, for those aged three to five years; infants, for those aged five to seven years; and juniors, for those aged seven to eleven years.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to combine all that is traditionally best in education, together with progressive and forward-thinking ideas. It aims to enable pupils to become socially responsible citizens and life-long learners in a safe and happy environment.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from local professional families with a range of cultural backgrounds, which reflect the local area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the range of ability of the pupils on entry to Reception is above average. The school has identified fourteen pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom six receive additional support. Two pupils have an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for three pupils, none of whom require additional support. The school seeks to challenge pupils in all aspects of school life through its programme for those who are more able.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. In addition, the standards relating to toilet and washing facilities are also included. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets almost all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements. In order to meet all the standards, the school should take immediate action to remedy the deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to almost all current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 The school does not ensure that children are fully safeguarded because it has not always ensured that prohibition from teaching checks are completed for all staff before they take up their appointments.
- 2.9 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 6, 9-16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but those in paragraphs 7(a) and (b) [safeguarding] are not met.**

Action point 1

- **The school must ensure that prior to commencement of employment, all staff providing instruction to pupils have a prohibition from teaching check [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor has not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of the pupils so that the other standards are consistently met.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is not met.

Action point 2

- **The proprietor must ensure effective oversight of pre-employment checks so that the leadership and management develop the skills and knowledge they need to ensure that the regulatory standards are met consistently, fulfil their responsibilities effectively and thus actively promote pupils' welfare [paragraph 34 (1)(a), (b) and (c)].**

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS PROVISION

- 2.20 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good
- 2.21 Children make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Adults know the children, their likes and dislikes, their habits and routines extremely well; consequently, children are happy and feel safe and secure. Where children are not making the expected progress, staff are aware of their needs and are able to devise activities to support their development.
- 2.22 Children clearly enjoy their time in the setting. They are confident when approaching adults and enjoy mixing with children in other rooms. There is a good shared understanding of children's safeguarding and welfare requirements and all involved are very well aware of their responsibilities to protect the children in their care. All the required recruitment checks relating to staff working in the registered setting are satisfactorily completed. Leadership and management show good commitment to evaluating the setting in order to improve the children's life chances and to support practitioners to be confident in their roles and committed to the progress and development of the children in their care. The previous EYFS inspection recommended that information gleaned from profile scores is used to improve provision across the EYFS as a whole; thorough attention is now paid to all assessment tools, thus ensuring all children make good progress.

EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 2.23 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.
- 2.24 Leadership and management show an ambitious vision for the development of the setting, providing excellent levels of care. Good attention is paid to staff development, supervision, and performance management in order to maintain high professional practice, thus furthering children's learning and development. Great care, including an annual questionnaire, is taken to ascertain the views of parents. These are thoroughly considered, and form part of the comprehensive system of self-evaluation which regularly reviews all aspects of the provision, so as to improve the children's educational experience further. The school now communicates the planned educational programmes to parents more frequently, so that they can support learning more easily at home. Careful consideration is given to ensuring that the activities, particularly those that are led by adults, build on the interests and needs of the children and engage them well. These activities cover all the learning requirements of the EYFS, focusing especially on communication as well as personal and physical development. On occasion, children who were not working with an adult found accessing a range of resources challenging, thus limiting independent exploration due to limited planning.
- 2.25 Leadership and management plan the curriculum effectively so that all children, including those with SEND, make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Although desirable outcomes are described, planning is not always specific in detailing how these are to be achieved. Children benefit from the active promotion of equality and diversity, including celebrations of festivals, which often involve parents. This is enhanced by photographs of the children's families sharing aspects of their culture, a feature of the room's display that the children particularly enjoy. Great care is taken to support the development of desirable values. Children are able to exercise choice in both food and activities. They are encouraged to take responsibility through warm, positive praise, for example when tidying their toys. Leadership and management have ensured that adults are aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and protecting children from danger, including that posed by radicalisation and extremism. Some recruitment requirements were not implemented before staff started work in the wider school, but these do not impact on the safety and

well-being of the children in the setting, as these adults do not have unsupervised access to children in the early years setting.

QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- 2.26 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 2.27 Adults have high expectations of what each child can achieve. Careful observation and consultation with parents inform accurate assessment so that in almost all cases, practitioners devise appropriate activities that enable children of all abilities to make good progress. Well-qualified staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how children develop, and use this to devise suitably challenging activities which promote their learning and understanding, such as using mathematical terms when comparing dinosaur dimensions or precise vocabulary when exploring the attributes of wet sand. Key persons ensure that children are closely observed and their progress noted, using the early years frameworks and well-being scales as audit tools. Parents' comments are also used to support and reinforce assessments. Adults use these observations and their detailed knowledge of the children to plan good activities that extend children's learning. Where development is not in line with expectations, such as in language acquisition or physical development, discussions with parents explore possible interventions which may include making use of links with outside agencies. Signing is also used effectively to aid communication for children with limited verbal development. Good modelling of language, thoughtful interaction by staff and some carefully constructed activities with a clear focus enable children to participate confidently in new experiences.
- 2.28 The setting provides a good variety of resources for parents, such as story books to borrow. Helpful information about the early years framework and child development, including language acquisition, play ideas, and common ailments is also provided. Contact books give good guidance on ways parents can understand how children learn and develop, and thus support their children's progress. The resources used reflect the diversity of society, with a varied range of toys, books and displays showing different ethnicities and cultures. Supportive teaching enables children to acquire the necessary skills to develop and learn. They communicate with their key person and other adults including visitors. They frequently mix with children in other early years rooms and share experiences and activities so they are well prepared for transition. They enjoy meeting older children, particularly in whole-school events such as the 'Monday Mile' when the older pupils accompany the little ones and early years staff around the field.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE

- 2.29 The personal development behaviour and welfare of children are good.
- 2.30 Children enjoy the activities, particularly those led by adults. They look to adults for support and praise, which is freely given throughout the setting, supporting the children's self-esteem and confidence. Staff provide positive role models and demonstrate how to learn effectively, including making mistakes and trying again, for example when an adult was trying to tip out sand from a mould. The child was engaging positively with the repetition until success was achieved. Children show obvious enjoyment when involved in interesting activities. This was seen when children showed delight as they learnt to use and control a variety of tools, including brushes, rollers and their hands, to successfully explore textures of paint and other materials. They communicate effectively when they require a drink and are beginning to be aware of their personal hygiene needs. Well-chosen stories and rhymes encourage children to develop an imaginative response, such as pretending to row a boat while the adult sings an appropriate rhyme. The younger children regularly join older ones for a meal, so they can observe and benefit from seeing more proficient children's behaviour. They also interact positively with other adults and older children so that they are well prepared for their next move.

2.31 Warm, supportive relationships and safe routines enable children to feel emotionally secure and confident to explore new experiences. Attendance is regularly and promptly checked. Adults are skilled in promoting positive behaviour and this is consistent across the setting. Children are praised for behaving appropriately, and successfully distracted from any that is less good. Even the youngest children learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, when wiping their hands before and after eating. The provision of healthy meals and snacks, and the discussion with the adults about the importance of hygiene and healthy food, is the beginning of an understanding of the importance of a good diet. Adults use their knowledge and skills to help children recognise not only their own feelings and emotions but also to appreciate that other children also have needs; they learn to be quiet when others are sleeping. This is the beginning of learning to respect others and become a responsible member of society. The recruitment procedures ensure the checks relevant to staff working in the setting are undertaken.

OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

2.32 Outcomes for children are good.

2.33 All children, including those with SEND, progress well from their different starting points. They understand that speech transmits meaning and are beginning to be able to express their needs and preferences. They follow familiar rhymes and use the appropriate actions independently, such as using their fingers to represent twinkling stars. They sustain concentration and involvement in activities, such as exploring mark making. They also follow direction by adults and copy adult behaviour. Some children are beginning to be able to put on clothing, feed themselves and identify their belongings such as cups or shoes. They enjoy looking at books and can hold them correctly and turn the pages. They develop their physical skills when walking, running, or crawling in the school gym and grounds. They respond to other children and are beginning to interact with each other. The majority meet the expected standards of development and some exceed them. The children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Ensure leadership and management monitor planning to ensure staff are given appropriate guidance to maximise and evaluate children's progress.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

| <i>School name</i> | <i>National Curriculum name</i> |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Little acorns | Nursery (2 to 3 years of age) |
| Kindergarten | Nursery (3 to 4 years of age) |

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills. They are articulate, confident in expressing their views and keen to contribute fully in lessons.
- Higher order thinking skills are less well developed in the more able pupils due to tasks which are not always focused on their needs.
- Pupils of all ages demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Pupils work together effectively, and generally demonstrate good study skills across the curriculum.
- On occasions, pupils have limited opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils have a deep sense of right and wrong. Their behaviour and manners are impeccable, and they show substantial respect for each other and value others' opinions.
- Pupils have a strong appreciation of their own culture, and that of others, and show considerable sensitivity towards those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils gain confidence and self-knowledge through exceptionally positive and well-developed relationships with staff.
- Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Provide all pupils, particularly the more able, with sufficient challenge to ensure their needs are fully met.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to learn independently through open-ended activities.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5 Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent speaking and listening skills, communicating confidently and articulately across a range of subjects. Their outstanding fluency in communication stems from the considerable range of opportunities given to all to participate in the classroom, take part in the extensive London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) programme and perform in dramatic productions. Pupils, including those with SEND, write with good fluency. Younger pupils have reading ages above that expected for their age. They use their excellent knowledge of letters and sounds to read and spell to a level beyond that expected for their age, for example, when describing the seasons using vocabulary from the interactive whiteboard. They demonstrated considerable enjoyment and engagement when challenged to write new words. In a lesson on the Vikings, older pupils used highly effective reasoning skills and sensitive, expansive vocabulary when writing to Odin as Freya, begging to go back home to Scandinavia. Pupils writing on *A Day in the Life of a Pollen Seed* displayed outstanding maturity and empathy. Across the school, pupils display high levels of listening skills, whether successfully answering challenging questions from a visiting yoga teacher in assembly, or working well collaboratively when developing a play script. The teachers' expectations of high standards of behaviour enable pupils to concentrate and listen well to instructions.

- 3.6 Across the curriculum, pupils show a very high level of understanding and skills relative to their age. Children in the EYFS successfully develop language, mathematical, social, physical and creative skills in their learning in both play-based and more formal situations, through a good range of opportunities which includes games, songs, and rhymes. In the EYFS, open-ended activities are used to develop children's ability to think for themselves, identify problems, make decisions and devise their own solutions, fully satisfying a recommendation of the previous inspection. Younger pupils achieve success in literacy and numeracy because of good planning and well-directed individual support for those with SEND. All staff use positive encouragement and praise effectively to help pupils of all abilities to develop their physical skills to a high level. Pupils' good progress is supported by a whole-school marking scheme. The best written feedback gives helpful advice, although this is not used consistently across year groups, which limits some pupils' opportunities to reflect and set useful targets. The pupils' outstanding skills in creative and performing arts are strongly supported by the specialist teaching provided. Pupils perform at consistently high levels in music and drama, with 45 pupils gaining distinctions in the most recent public speaking and drama examinations.
- 3.7 From the EYFS upwards, pupils show excellent attitudes to their work. They enjoy learning for its own sake and derive satisfaction from working hard and doing their best. Pupils enthusiastically grasp the opportunity to work together with a partner or in a small group, and they produce outstanding collaborative efforts. Staff positively support them, with extensive verbal feedback and encouragement. Pupils' diligence is reflected in their written work, which is of a consistently good quality, fully meeting a recommendation from the school's previous inspection. Pupils organise their resources for the day efficiently before lessons begin, and show initiative in organising themselves and managing their time effectively during lessons and activities. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm in their physical activities outside the classroom. They display determination and perseverance when taking the exciting and engaging opportunities provided through the outdoor activity programme. All pupils are supported by warm, encouraging staff, who use praise highly effectively to motivate them. Pupils also support one another well in lessons where positive relationships between all members of the school community are evident. The commitment of school leaders and staff at all levels to promote the school's ethos, The Woodlands Way, supports pupils of all ages to do the best they can.
- 3.8 Pupils' attainment based on results from standardised tests, lessons observations, the scrutiny of their work, leavers' destinations, and the school's own assessment data is judged to be above national age-related expectations. Pupils of different abilities and needs make good progress. Pupils with SEND achieve and progress in line with their peers as they are well provided with suitable additional support from staff who understand their individual needs well. In the best lessons, pupils make excellent progress through the teachers' use of comprehensive planning and challenging, well-directed tasks. In some lessons, more able pupils do not make sufficient progress, as all pupils are given similar work. The school leadership is aware of this and is already working on strategies to ensure all pupils make effective progress. Most parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school is effective in meeting their children's educational needs. Year 6 pupils move on to a range of selective and non-selective senior schools, for which they are well prepared. Some more able pupils gain scholarships, including recent academic and music awards to senior schools.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, pupils handle numbers with confidence and competence. Pupils' mathematical skills develop well because of the enthusiasm and stimulation provided by the teaching and the opportunities given to pupils to apply these skills across different subjects. Children in the EYFS were able to identify and match similar shapes of different sizes and use them to tessellate and make patterns, whilst older pupils confidently tested hypotheses in a challenging game involving five-digit numbers.

- 3.10 Pupils are competent users of information and communications technology (ICT) and apply this well to support their learning across other subjects. They use the internet to extend their knowledge. Older pupils showed good standards of ICT, using tablets to research the effects of plastic in the ocean before writing it up as part of their 'Big Write' project. All pupils from Reception onwards benefit from discrete ICT lessons; for example, they displayed high level reasoning skills when putting instructions in the correct order during a lesson on algorithms. Children in EYFS access interactive whiteboards independently and use them effectively to support their mathematical understanding. Pupils gain good ICT skills from well-planned lessons, the encouragement of knowledgeable staff and the considerable investment in resources the school has made.
- 3.11 From an early age, pupils develop good study skills. They apply their knowledge confidently to new situations, for example, when predicting successfully how many supports were needed for a bridge, and counting them out accurately. Though the teaching of older pupils is thorough and covers the required ground, some questions check knowledge without extending the pupils' independent thought or tapping into their natural curiosity. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils had to wait until all members of the class had reached a level of understanding before moving onto more challenging work. This results in an over-emphasis on review and repetition, with pupils not fully challenged.
- 3.12 Pupils' skills outside the school's normal programme of lessons are excellent. Specialist teaching and extra-curricular clubs give pupils opportunities to develop their sporting, musical and dramatic skills to a high level. Pupils have competed at a county level in gymnastics and cross-country with one pupil achieving second place in a school's national cross-country championships. Many pupils learn a musical instrument and a number gain success in their external examinations. Pupils gain high levels of confidence along with outstanding speaking and listening skills through the school's extensive LAMDA programme. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. The older and younger pupils that attend after-school care are well catered for. Pupils' confidence is enhanced by the recognition they receive in assemblies attended by parents and the school's enthusiastic and professional leadership.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils are joyful, open, friendly and confident and this has a very positive influence on how they conduct themselves. They consider the needs of others and demonstrate excellent empathy in relation to other members of the school community. Children in the EYFS persevere with tasks, and express their interests and opinions with ease and confidence. For example, older children in the EYFS worked diligently to build a track for cars they had made, displaying perseverance when dealing several times with the effects of gravity on an unstable bridge construction. Pre-prep and prep pupils show high levels of resilience in their approach to both academic and extra-curricular activities tasks. For example, younger pupils worked hard on a challenging task to create portraits in the style of Picasso. The 'Woodlands Way', an agreed set of values championed by strong yet sensitive leadership, has a significant impact on the development of the pupils' understanding of themselves. As a result, pupils' self-esteem and self-awareness is excellent. Pupils deal maturely with failure and are encouraged to develop resilience and to strive for improvement. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school successfully supports their children's personal development and meets their children's pastoral and welfare needs effectively.

- 3.15 In all areas of school life, pupils make excellent decisions. For example, older pupils enjoy being prefects in a variety of roles, including caring and nurturing younger pupils in the pre-prep. Pupils of all ages learn from experience that the decisions they make are important and can affect their learning. They have high expectations of themselves and of others, meaning that exemplary behaviour is the norm. Pupils' decision-making skills are highly developed, and they become increasingly aware that the decisions they take contribute to their success and well-being, such as being aware of their food intake at home and in school in order to eat a better diet to improve their physical and academic performance. Pupils are encouraged to voice their opinions and articulate their feelings about how to enhance their school through a highly effective school council.
- 3.16 Pupils show excellent spiritual awareness in special assemblies such as those on well-being and yoga; they gain an outstanding understanding of non-materialistic aspects of life. For instance, in an art lesson, when talking about a Picasso painting, pupils showed considerable appreciation when saying, 'things can be beautiful for no reason'. Pupils enjoy the opportunities given to them to reflect quietly during the day, and outdoor learning sessions give pupils a highly developed appreciation of the natural world around them.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate outstanding respect for others' religious beliefs and practices, both within the curriculum and during assemblies where pupils explore thoughts, values and experiences of people from a range of different religious and cultural backgrounds. For example, pupils embraced and celebrated the diversity within the school community during a recent assembly involving Hindu parents talking about Diwali. All pupils, and the vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire, said that the school actively promotes respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils' knowledge of a wider range of cultural experiences is strengthened through role-play and resources representing diversity in EYFS, and through the religious studies and personal, social, and health education curricula for older pupils.
- 3.18 Behaviour is excellent, and pupils understand and respect the rules of the classroom from their first days in the school. They act responsibly as individuals and work together as part of the whole class. Even the youngest pupils understand that some behaviour is unacceptable, and know that saying sorry is a good response. They care for each other and for their school surroundings. All staff treat pupils with respect and this is reciprocated with the highest levels of politeness and good manners. Pupils of all ages have an outstanding grasp of the distinction between right and wrong, and are encouraged to take full responsibility for their actions. In interviews, pupils stated that the school teaches them that they cannot always be right, and that they should apologise, make up, learn from it and move on.
- 3.19 Children in the EYFS work extremely well together, solving problems and sharing when on the same task. During independent learning, one thoughtful group of children tended to the garden plants whilst others enjoyed working together, pretending to paint the outside of the classroom. Pupils across the rest of the school demonstrate excellent social skills. They have strong collaborative skills, working together positively to achieve common goals, such as when they work productively with each other to explain their thinking and answers in mathematics. More-able pupils gave their time freely, cheerfully, and without prompting to support and explain how to read very large numbers to other members of the class.

- 3.20 Pupils of all ages have an excellent understanding of the needs of the wider world. They know what they can do to help others, often suggesting their own ideas to meet their needs. Pupils form outstandingly positive relationships with each other, and enjoy collaborating and supporting each other on communal enterprises. They work well together to achieve common goals, such as fundraising to help build a school in Cambodia and collecting food for deprived families in the local community during harvest festival. Pupils identify strongly with the needs of those closest to them, raising money for two medical charities directly affecting members of the school community. The school council is very active in representing the pupils' voice, and a number of important decisions affecting the school's daily life have come about as a result. This is due to the willingness of senior staff and the proprietor to react to pupils' opinions, such as the introduction of the 'trim trail' which was suggested by the council and funded by the active parents' association.
- 3.21 Through encouragement, pupils make good choices and are keen to exercise and stay fit. They state confidently which foods and drinks are healthy for them and know how they help their bodies. Pupils of all ages chose rainbow salad pots at lunch and older pupils knew that some fizzy drinks contain secret sugars which are harmful to their teeth. The school places healthy choices and exercise as a priority throughout the school and pupils embrace this healthy lifestyle positively. Pupils benefit from a wide range of sports throughout the school week and from the extensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. All pupils were very clear about who they should speak to at school if they are unhappy. Exceptionally caring leadership and staff knowledge ensure pupils' individual pastoral needs are fully met. Pupils' outstandingly positive and trusting relationships with staff are a feature of the school. Pupils know how to stay safe online. This is because of the excellent care taken by the diligent leadership in providing clear guidance and establishing safe procedures, such as appropriate filtering of websites the pupils use while at school.

4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a director of the school, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

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| Mr Dougal Philps | Reporting inspector |
| Mrs Eithne Webster | Co-ordinating inspector for early years |
| Mrs Anne Oliver | Team inspector for EYFS (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school) |
| Dr Zoe Weetman | Compliance and team inspector (Pre-prep headmistress, IAPS school) |