



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ILFORD URSULINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ilford Ursuline Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Ilford Ursuline Preparatory School
DfE Number	317/6062
Registered Charity Number	1130196
Address	Ilford Ursuline Preparatory School 2-8 Coventry Road Ilford Essex IG1 4QR
Telephone Number	020 8518 4050
Fax Number	020 8518 2060
Email Address	iups@iups.org.uk
Headmaster	Mr Richard Hester
Chair of Governors	Mr Peter Nicholson
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	271
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (101 boys; 170 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 144 5-11: 127
Head of EYFS Setting	Ms Emma O'Toole
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	12 March 2013 to 15 March 2013

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 May 2008.

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. 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

Mrs Teresa Dunbar

Mr Peter Mulhern

Mrs Eithne Webster

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ilford Ursuline Preparatory School is a Roman Catholic preparatory school for girls and boys situated in the London Borough of Redbridge. Formerly a department of and sharing a site with a high school, it became autonomous in 1999 when the high school, now an academy, joined the maintained sector. The prep school is under the trusteeship of the Ursuline Sisters, and is governed by a board of eight governors appointed by the trustees.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all pupils, parents, staff and visitors, and to offer to all pupils and staff the experience of working in a Christian community. It seeks to encourage pupils to become independent learners, and to provide a broad, balanced curriculum which promotes the full academic, personal, physical, social, emotional and spiritual development of the individual child.
- 1.3 The school educates pupils aged from three to eleven years, offering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. Since the previous inspection, the composition of the senior leadership team has changed, with the appointment of a new headmaster in February 2012, a new deputy in April 2012 and a new co-ordinator of the EYFS in September 2011. Boys have been admitted to the main school, having previously attended the Nursery only, and none are yet in Years 5 and 6.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 271 pupils on roll, of whom 144 were in the EYFS. The ability profile of the school to Year 2 is in line with the national average, with a wide spread of abilities represented. From Year 3 onwards, the ability profile is above the national average.
- 1.5 Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Eighty-five pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and four receive support for this. Twenty pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive support from the school. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 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 The school meets its aims successfully and provides pupils with a good start to their education. Its Catholic ethos is at the heart of its work, and pupils develop as well-rounded individuals with excellent personal qualities and a love of learning. Pupils' achievements are good, both in their academic work and in their extra-curricular pursuits. They make good progress through the school from the EYFS onwards, reaching standards that are well above average in relation to national age-related expectations. Both boys and girls are keen, enthusiastic learners who work hard in class, take pride in their work and always try to do their best. Pupils enjoy an interesting curriculum that provides a good grounding in the core areas of literacy and numeracy, and in religious education (RE), and develops their skills well in the humanities and music. Limited time is currently allocated to physical education (PE) and design technology (DT). Pupils have a range of good extra-curricular activities, particularly in music, though provision in sport is limited. Teaching is mostly good, with some that is excellent. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and give them ample opportunities to work independently and use their own initiative. There is some inconsistency in the way in which teachers plan to meet the needs of the range of abilities in their classes.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They have a strong sense of spirituality and a secure knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. All feel very proud of being part of the school community and are keen to make their contribution to it. Relationships between pupils of all cultural traditions are harmonious, and pupils are genuinely interested in the faiths and backgrounds of others. The school offers pupils excellent pastoral care. Teachers know their pupils very well and make every effort to ensure that they are happy and settled at school. Good attention is given to welfare, health and safety, and the school complies fully with regulatory requirements. The personal, social and emotional development of the children in the EYFS is good and they are well cared for and supported.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management is good. Governors have made good appointments of new senior staff, set the school's path for the future and are diligent in ensuring that requirements are met. Senior leaders have quickly grasped the school's needs and set about prioritising and tackling them. Many staff are new, but, nonetheless, there is a strong sense of teamwork and common purpose. Although they have not yet had time to make a difference in their areas, newly appointed subject leaders are enthusiastic about their roles and keen to bring about improvement. Links with parents are good. Some parents have expressed individual concerns but most feel that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop the role of subject leaders in implementing consistent and effective systems for monitoring and improving provision and outcomes in their areas.
2. Increase the allocation of time within the curriculum for PE and DT, and extend opportunities for extra-curricular sport.
3. Ensure that all teaching consistently meets the needs of all pupils, challenging the more able and supporting the less able appropriately.
4. In the EYFS, include in teachers' planning provision for the needs of all children.
5. Ensure that assessment information for the parents of EYFS children is presented consistently in Nursery and in Reception.

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 good.
- 3.2 The school successfully meets its aims to encourage pupils to learn and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils are articulate and have a good vocabulary. During a meditation session in Year 2, for example, pupils were able to define the word 'calm' as patient, relaxed or peaceful. They listen well and respond thoughtfully. Pupils are able to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum and can write purposefully. Their writing skills have improved since the previous inspection, because the school has increased its focus on grammar, sentence structure and punctuation, and has given pupils more chances to apply these through extended writing, for example in history, RE and science. Their reading skills are generally advanced for their age, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- 3.3 Pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills competently across the curriculum and enjoy attending the mathematics club. They develop a good ability to think logically and solve problems. Pupils are creative and have well-developed performance skills. Their sporting skills are satisfactory, but less well developed because of more limited opportunities to practise them within the constraints of the timetable and the school's accommodation. Most pupils gain places at the school of their choice when they leave, and they achieve well in a range of extra-curricular activities, particularly music. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve similarly well because of the specialist support they receive.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but on the evidence available it is judged to be well above national age-related expectations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally reach higher standards of attainment in mathematics than in English. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' standards of attainment are generally well above average in both mathematics and English. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability as they move through the school, due to teachers' efforts in helping them to build on their prior learning and practise the skills they have acquired.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are keen learners who are interested in the world around them. They take a pride in their work, which is well presented, and they value teachers' comments on how to improve it. Pupils listen well in class and are always ready to participate in lessons, answering questions and offering their ideas. They concentrate well and always want to do their best. Pupils welcome the opportunities they have for independent work, such as research or projects. Year 5, for example, set to work on exploring the Victorian era with relish, combining their skills in literacy, history and information and communication technology (ICT), along with their capacity for teamwork. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic learners who value their education and are determined to succeed.
- 3.6 Children in the Early Years are happy and enthusiastic. Most come into school cheerfully and those who require reassurance are supported sensitively. Children make good progress in their learning and development. They are active learners, engaged and focused on an interesting range of activities. Standards are good, particularly in numeracy and literacy, where skilful teaching and support from

teaching assistants, as well as an excellent range of resources, enable the majority to make good progress relative to their starting points. They can recognise numbers and many can add and subtract. They are developing their knowledge of mathematical vocabulary, and are proficient and accurate when using phrases such as 'taller than' or 'smaller than'.

- 3.7 The Nursery children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories, while Reception children have made a good start at learning to read, using a phonics programme and a reading scheme. Children enjoy the regular routines and structures of school, and those in Reception are proud to be chosen for class tasks, including assisting at the celebration of Mass. The skills and attitudes they develop in the EYFS are a great asset as they move on to the next stage of their education.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The overall provision effectively covers the requisite areas of learning and broadly supports the school aim to promote the full development of the individual child. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 work mainly with class teachers, but receive specialist teaching in French and music. The previous inspection identified a need to improve the balance of the timetable to consider allocating further time to PE and DT, and this has not yet been resolved. The use of ICT is growing, with the provision of laptops for all pupils in Year 1 to Year 6.
- 3.10 The curriculum is suitable for all ages and abilities, and in many subjects it caters for the broad range of pupils' needs. Planning for continuity of learning has been improved since the previous inspection and is well developed in some subject areas such as English and mathematics, where new schemes of work and good subject co-ordination have been introduced. Subject co-ordination is not as well developed in other areas of the curriculum but a number of newly appointed subject co-ordinators are actively engaged in improving the consistency of planning. The recently devised comprehensive monitoring programme is intended to bring about future improvement across the board. Religious education includes diverse cross-curricular links and richly complements other subject areas.
- 3.11 The school provides satisfactory support overall for pupils with SEND and the small number learning English as an additional language. Specialist support is good, but support in class is not always effective when no teaching assistants are present. The special educational needs co-ordinator works with other learning support staff and class teachers to prepare individual education plans, which are used effectively and regularly reviewed. Gifted and talented pupils are also identified by the school and a programme for provision and monitoring is under development. A presentation to parents on this topic is planned for the near future.
- 3.12 The academic curriculum is supported by a range of extra-curricular activities that take place at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Pupils speak highly of these activities, which include orchestra, choir, mathematics, science, Latin and dance. Educational visits also enhance the pupils' learning experience and include outings to a local farm, a London museum, junior citizenship events, a day trip to France and a Year 6 residential activity week. Pupils take part in local musical events and also benefit from a range of visiting speakers. Tree planting and geography walks have taken place in the local park. The school has developed and actively maintains its strong links with the local community, including the adjacent

academy, which shares its hall and dining hall, dance studio, food technology room and additional outdoor space. The wider Ursuline community provides spiritual enrichment as well as staff development.

- 3.13 There is full coverage of all the areas of learning in the EYFS, and careful note has been taken of the new national requirements. Children's imagination is stimulated by activities based on well-chosen stories. Good opportunities are available for the children to extend their learning through the provision of extra-curricular activities, such as piano lessons and speech and drama.
- 3.14 The children in the EYFS are given a range of opportunities to exercise, both in their outdoor learning areas and in the curriculum provision, where they have the opportunity to develop skill and proficiency in PE. In some cases a considerable amount of time is spent changing into PE clothing. They are encouraged to think about the value and importance of exercise.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good overall.
- 3.16 Planning and delivery of teaching are mostly good and sometimes excellent. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils were observed in all lessons and were warm, caring and mutually respectful. This results in a high standard of pupil behaviour and a genuine desire to meet the teachers' expectations. Comprehensive teacher knowledge was evident and the enthusiasm often infectious.
- 3.17 Planning of teaching is frequently thorough and indicates pupils who might require additional help as well as those who are working at a higher level, though this is not always the case. In Years 1 and 2, pupils of different abilities are regularly set different tasks. However, in a significant number of lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, all pupils were set the same work. An exception to this was in a Year 5 literacy topic on the Victorians, where pupils were working in groups of 'experts' researching aspects of their life. This clearly supported the school's aim to encourage pupils to become independent learners by building on their curiosity and desire to learn, and so develop their skills.
- 3.18 In the best lessons, teaching employs an imaginative range of methods to stimulate pupils' interest and foster their application. Pupils are actively involved in their learning and progress is made at a brisk pace. The diversity of teaching styles, however, is not apparent in all lessons. The level of homework adequately supports learning.
- 3.19 The lesson objectives are generally shared with pupils, who are encouraged to evaluate their own learning. Particularly good use is made of talking with partners and peer assessment. Work has been undertaken recently to improve the consistency of marking, and pupils particularly value their teachers' comments. They are encouraged to respond using green pens and this has also been well received. Target setting is evident in many sections of the school, with pupils using their targets in order to improve.
- 3.20 Tracking of pupils' progress is being undertaken, and is beginning to yield valuable feedback as it becomes more established. Teachers work hard to make excellent use of the available resources. They provide attractive classroom environments, with relevant resources and ample displays of pupils' work.

- 3.21 In the EYFS, the teachers and teaching assistants provide a secure, supportive environment where children are enthusiastic learners and gain pride and confidence in their achievements. In the best teaching, use is made of a range of strategies, such as talking with partners, together with tasks and activities to engage and progress the learning of all children. The staff know each individual child well and this, along with careful planning, ensures that almost all children's needs are met, including those with SEND or EAL. On occasion, however, EYFS children with challenging behaviour, identified as requiring a high level of support, do not get the support they need to participate in the planned activities. Behavioural targets for these children have been identified with the help of outside agencies, however their progress and achievements are not clearly indicated in planning and recording.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in achieving its aim to provide an environment where human values and compassion are at the heart of the process of education and where courtesy, kindness and consideration for others are fostered in all the pupils.
- 4.3 The quality of pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils are self-confident and self-aware, showing emotional maturity for their age. They participate with enthusiasm in singing hymns and readily discuss the themes that are explored in assemblies and in religious education lessons. Pupils also benefit spiritually from attending weekly meditation sessions as well as sharing the experience of participating in regular whole-school Mass, where all pupils are encouraged to feel a part of the inclusive school community.
- 4.4 The pupils demonstrate excellent moral development and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Its Catholic foundation underpins the moral code of the school, and this is reinforced through daily RE lessons and morning and afternoon prayers. Pupils have a clear understanding of the principles that underpin the school's expectations. They are courteous and considerate with one another and with adults. The weekly 'merit assembly' provides an excellent platform to celebrate the successes and achievements of others and to demonstrate mutual respect. The school's house system, which has recently been developed, also provides an excellent framework to encourage pupils to work together and to support one another, through the house football cup, general knowledge competition and house relay. The eco-committee provides opportunities for pupils to take an active role in looking after the planet through recycling and reducing energy use, as well as to improve the awareness of the whole school through assemblies.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. The Pupil Enhancement Programme week provides opportunities for all pupils in Years 1 to 6 to focus on creativity, co-operation and collaboration. When interviewed, pupils expressed that they are happy at school and that they feel at ease within their supportive relationships with both their peers and staff. Pupils also contribute willingly and generously to charitable causes. Pupils are elected to the school council, and its members take their role seriously, discussing school improvement and representing the views of their peers.
- 4.6 The Catholic faith is fundamental to the ethos of the school, and pupils are at ease discussing issues principally concerned with Christianity. Many different cultural customs are represented within the school, but opportunities are not always fully developed to explore other major world faiths and cultural traditions. Relationships between pupils of all cultural backgrounds are harmonious, and pupils are genuinely interested in the traditions of others. They have an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school.
- 4.7 The strong Ursuline ethos permeates the EYFS and all children are familiar with and demonstrate the aims of helpfulness and tolerance. Other cultures are celebrated, such as the recent celebrations of Chinese New Year, when parents came into the EYFS to talk about the festival and share their knowledge with the children. Parents

of those in the EYFS speak highly of the personal and social development of their children.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The quality of relationships amongst all in the school community is a strength of the school. The staff provide excellent support and guidance for the pupils, in accordance with the school's mission statement: 'Live and learn in harmony caring for each other'.
- 4.10 The constant encouragement of confidence in all areas of school life assists the development of the extremely positive relationships between staff and pupils. In interviews, some pupils expressed that some staff are not consistent in dealing with them, but generally pupils see staff as kind and supportive to their needs, a view supported by the findings of the inspection.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through developing an awareness of sensible eating habits, and this is reflected through the nutritious options available at lunchtime. The importance of taking regular exercise is not fully explored due to the limited opportunities for physical education and games within the school curriculum and the lack of suitable facilities on site. In interviews, pupils emphasised that they would like greater opportunities to participate in more regular sporting activities.
- 4.12 The school successfully promotes good behaviour and has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. In interviews and in responses to the pupils' questionnaire, some older pupils expressed concerns that instances of bullying had occurred and had not been dealt with effectively. Investigation by inspectors, including scrutiny of records, found that the school handles any instances of bullying appropriately. Pupils are happy to use the 'worry box' whenever they have any concerns and they find that the friendship club a very helpful form of support.
- 4.13 The school employs effective methods to seek the views of pupils, and the school council provides an excellent forum for the discussion of whole-school issues. A key strength which underpins the supportive environment of the school is that the staff know the pupils extremely well, and pupils feel confident to talk to staff, whom they respect and trust. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.14 The behaviour of the children in the EYFS is generally good. Most children know the routines, and what is and is not expected. In the Nursery, the key people know their charges well and group times enable the children to form strong bonds with their carers. The children feel secure and happy, and respond warmly to the adults in school as well as their friends. They are confident that the staff care for them and will protect and look after them, both during the school day and in the extended day provision of breakfast and after-school clubs. The children are developing independence both in the classroom and in their personal hygiene. They understand how they can help their own healthy development by such practices as washing hands and drinking water. Children are well prepared for transition either from Nursery to Reception or from Reception to Year 1. The recent introduction of a transition class for older Nursery children has facilitated the move to Reception.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.16 The school meets its aim to consider the needs of every pupil in a secure, happy and stimulating environment. The child protection and safeguarding policy follows official guidance and is reviewed regularly. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are thorough and promoted effectively. All staff receive the relevant training so that they have a good knowledge of school procedures. The chair of governors oversees pupil safeguarding matters, together with the leadership. Secure arrangements are in place to ensure the safe recruitment of employees.
- 4.17 The school provides a safe environment for its pupils and all necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Health and safety matters are discussed at the weekly staff and senior leadership team meetings, and liaison with the site staff ensures that any issues are addressed and necessary procedures reviewed. General risk assessments ensure that the safety of all is a priority and detailed risk assessments ensure the safety of pupils while on educational trips. Testing of electrical equipment is carried out regularly, although not always to schedule.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored electronically for the previous three years.
- 4.19 The school fulfils its responsibilities in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body fulfils its role effectively, helping the school to meet its aims with success. Governors have a great deal of relevant educational experience and are increasingly becoming more involved in the life of the school. They have a clear understanding of their function in holding the school to account, and review the implementation of the school development plan regularly and systematically. The governing body is committed to further improvement and has analysed the training needs of its members to put in place a programme of development.
- 5.3 Since the previous inspection, governors have made good appointments of senior staff and helped the school to meet the needs of the local community by increasing places in the Nursery, extending before- and after-school care and becoming co-educational. The EYFS co-ordinator attends governors' meetings to inform the board of developments.
- 5.4 Governors meet their statutory obligations well, and all regulations are fully met. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. The single central record and the associated paperwork are well organised and maintained. The governing body as a whole carries out its annual review of safeguarding and welfare in accordance with requirements.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 The new senior leadership team has made a good start and achieved much in a short period of time. It has swiftly analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the school, produced a relevant and prioritised school development plan, and introduced a programme of monitoring and evaluation for the curriculum. Subject co-ordinators are mostly newly appointed and lack experience in their roles, but they are motivated and enthusiastic about leading their subjects. They have not yet had the chance to make an impact on provision and outcomes in their areas. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff, coupled with a shared desire to move the school forward and improve experiences for pupils still further.
- 5.7 Senior leaders ensure that the school fulfils its aims successfully, and that it meets its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. The school's policies fully meet requirements and its procedures operate smoothly, so that the pupils can thrive in a supportive environment where they are well known, valued and nurtured.
- 5.8 Self-evaluation is realistic and accurate, and senior leaders recognise the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. Some areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been tackled well. Pupils now have good opportunities to work independently and use their initiative, and the quality of marking and feedback is consistently good. The school development plan is now at the centre of school improvement as a working document, guiding the school's progress. Other priorities have not yet been fully addressed, due to the turnover of teaching staff and changes

in key leaders. These priorities include consistency in curriculum planning to ensure appropriate time allocation for all subjects, and consistency in the way in which teaching meets the needs of pupils of all abilities in all classes.

- 5.9 Recruitment procedures are robust and the necessary checks are recorded appropriately in the school's single central register of appointments. Senior leaders place much importance on the continuing professional development of staff. Staff training needs have been analysed and acted upon, so that staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities with regard to pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. A significant amount of training in safeguarding and in first aid has taken place to enable staff to protect pupils and keep them safe. Training relevant to the school's educational priorities, including independent learning and provision for gifted and talented pupils, has also been scheduled.
- 5.10 Within the EYFS, the school supports the professional development of staff through both external and internal training, including mentoring for newly qualified teachers. A good system of training evaluation is in place, whereby those staff who attend courses report on the course content on return to school and three months later write an assessment of the impact of the course on their practice. The school is also a training centre for apprentices, who are provided with mentoring and support in school in addition to their attendance at college one day a week, and the children benefit from their enthusiastic dedication.
- 5.11 Leadership across the EYFS is good, though recent new initiatives and provision in the Nursery have meant that focus has been primarily on this year group. There is a rigorous system of self-evaluation that is used to set targets for improvement. These encompass the curriculum, assessment, training and other areas. Staff work co-operatively, and effective systems of performance management and appraisal are in place.
- 5.12 Regular self-evaluation and assessment in the EYFS enable existing high standards to be maintained and identify areas for further development. Leaders and teachers speak highly of the involvement of the school's senior management in the setting.
- 5.13 The school maintains good relationships with parents. The majority of respondents to the parents' questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the education and support provided by the school. The school communicates well with parents and informs them of issues that affect the whole school or particular classes through the text messaging system. Letters, diary notes, newsletters and telephone calls are all used by the school to contact parents. The introduction of the weekly newsletter, accompanied by informative articles on educational matters, has been welcomed by parents. Parents are encouraged to support their children in areas such as reading, and this support has a direct impact on pupils' progress. On occasion, parents are invited into school to talk about subjects such as cultural festivals. This practice is enjoyable for all concerned and gives pupils good opportunities to learn about the cultural traditions of members of the school community.
- 5.14 A well-produced prospectus, as well as an informative website, provides parents of both current and prospective pupils with good information about the school and its policies. The Parents and Friends Association provides an opportunity for parents to be involved in social and other events that raise funds for the school. Parents are very supportive of events such as plays, in which their children participate.
- 5.15 A minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of their concerns and the provision of information relating to their children. The school's complaints

policy is available to parents and meets requirements. Inspectors found that the school follows its published procedures and that complaints are handled appropriately. In conversation, parents spoke highly of the recent parents' workshop, exploring the processes and procedures for entry to a grammar school, and further workshops on other topics are planned in order to improve communication. Inspectors found that there is a good system of reporting to parents, covering both attainment and progress. The best reports also include suggestions of ways that parents may help their children to progress.

- 5.16 The EYFS communicates well with parents throughout the year. The induction evenings, displays, information on joining the school, 'special books' and reporting opportunities enable parents to have good oversight of the progress of their children and the aims and ethos of the EYFS. However, assessment information for parents is presented differently in Nursery and Reception, which causes some confusion. The many photographs on display illustrating the children's activities are exceptionally well captioned, with descriptions from the seven areas of learning of the EYFS, and show how learning is extended through well-resourced play and activities.

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