



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
MAYFIELD PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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Mayfield Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Mayfield Preparatory School
DfE Number	335/6000
EYFS Number	EY285706
Registered Charity Number	529001
Address	Mayfield Preparatory School Sutton Road Walsall West Midlands WS1 2PD
Telephone Number	01922 624107
Email Address	info@mayfieldprep.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Matthew Draper
Chair of Governors	Mrs June Aubrook
Age Range	2 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	212
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (119 boys; 93 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 5 5-11: 143 3-5 (EYFS): 64
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Marilyn Martin
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	30 June to 03 July 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection of the whole school was in June 2009. The previous ISI inspection of the Early Years Foundation Stage was in March 2012.

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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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 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 Serena Alexander	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Sarah Gillam	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Dr Simon Willcocks	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Mayfield Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of two and eleven. It is part of the Queen Mary's Schools Foundation, which is a registered charity. The other two schools in the foundation are the state-maintained Grammar School for Boys and High School for Girls. Until 1944, the school was the preparatory school for the High School for Girls. In that year, it was set up as an independent school in its own right. The school has a board of governors separate from the other schools in the foundation. Governors include trustees of the foundation.
- 1.2 The school is situated in its own grounds, including a playing field, in a residential area of Walsall. It occupies a substantial town house, surrounded by gardens, with additional purpose-built accommodation providing specialist areas for science and art. The youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are housed in a new purpose-built facility. The older out buildings on the site have been converted to provide specialist areas for children in Reception and for music.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a constant, caring environment and to promote academic excellence. It seeks to encourage the development of self-confidence, determination and consideration for others, to stimulate spiritual awareness, and to encourage curiosity and a passion for learning. It endeavours to ensure that pupils are happy, independent learners and are thoroughly prepared for their next steps in education. The school motto is 'Believe it! Achieve It!'
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most pupils having ability that is above or in line with the national average. There are 69 children in the EYFS, aged from 2 to 5, and 143 pupils between the ages of 5 and 11. Fourteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and are given additional support by the school. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. There are three pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), two of whom receive support. Pupils come mainly from families who live within Walsall, although some travel from further afield, and are from a wide range of backgrounds, reflecting the cultural diversity of the local population.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage

School	NC name
Pre-Nursery	Nursery (ages 2 to 3)
Nursery	Nursery (ages 3 to 4)
Kindergarten	Reception (ages 4 to 5)

Years 1 to 6

School	NC name
Transition	Year 1
Form I	Year 2
Lower II	Year 3
Form II	Year 4
Upper II	Year 5
Lower III	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The achievement of the pupils is exceptional and fulfils the school's aims. The pupils are extremely articulate, and they listen attentively and write very well in a variety of contexts. They have excellent mathematical skills. Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are highly successful in their entry examinations to senior schools and several win scholarships. Throughout the school, the excellent quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' success. Since the previous inspection and in line with a recommendation made at that time, a new policy for marking and assessment has been successfully developed and implemented. The academic curriculum is stimulating, broad and balanced, and includes Spanish and French. Art, design technology (DT), drama and music feature strongly and an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities takes place at lunchtime and after school. The quality of provision in the EYFS is outstanding. All children are fully included in all activities and are challenged and supported appropriately, although those in Reception cannot use the outside area in all weathers.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent and reflects due regard to fundamental British values. The pupils are very confident and have very well-rounded personalities for their age. They have a strong sense of moral awareness, and are polite and well mannered. Pupils have a well-developed cultural understanding and show great respect for other faiths and cultures, including the many represented within the school community. The excellent quality of pastoral care is demonstrated in the mutual respect shared by staff and pupils. In the EYFS, children form friendships with adults and each other, and develop the confidence to try exciting new activities. The school successfully provides an environment where the welfare, health and safety of all individuals are promoted. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorously implemented and understood by all staff.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, and leadership and management, including those of the EYFS, is excellent. Governors offer a wide range of professional skills and share a common strong enthusiasm with leadership in providing the best possible education for the pupils in their care. Prudent financial planning has enabled suitable investment in staff, accommodation and new resources. The leadership and management of the school are extremely effective in providing strong pastoral and academic direction. Highly effective monitoring procedures are in place and performance management is used to develop the role of managers and leaders. The school maintains excellent links with parents. Those who responded to the questionnaire and those met informally during the inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Communication with parents is constructive although the school's new reporting criteria and homework policy are not fully understood. At present, EYFS assessment findings are not shared sufficiently frequently with parents. Many parents are former pupils and very much appreciate the school's family atmosphere, to which they make their own significant contribution. The school has responded positively to the findings of the previous inspection. All recommendations have been implemented successfully.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the assessment criteria for reports and the homework policy are clarified so that both are understood fully by parents.
 2. In the EYFS, develop ways to allow Reception children to work outside in all weathers.
 3. In the EYFS, share assessment findings more regularly with parents.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 The pupils are extremely well educated, successfully meeting the school's aims to develop pupil potential in all areas of the academic curriculum, sports and the creative arts. Pupils have excellent communication skills; they are highly articulate and their oral contributions to lessons are mature, purposeful and imaginative. They listen attentively and respond in lessons with thoughtful and pertinent answers, observations, explanations and suggestions. Pupils read with excellent levels of confidence, understanding, expression and fluency, and write very well in a variety of contexts, for example imaginative writing in English on the thoughts of a boy leaving home or factual writing in science on experiments with cress. Standards in the visual arts are particularly high and extend across a variety of media and year groups. Pupils demonstrate mature insights into many aspects of the artistic process and talk extremely knowledgeably about artists they have studied and the traditions they represent. Pupils have excellent mathematical skills that they apply well in different contexts, and the school enjoys a high degree of success in national mathematics competitions. Pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to physical education (PE).
- 3.3 At the age of 11, the majority of pupils move to selective maintained schools. Pupils also gain entry to academically selective independent schools. A high number are awarded academic, music or sports scholarships. Pupils perform very well in graded music, and speech and drama examinations, with many gaining distinction, and the choirs regularly win awards in a local music festival. Pupils participate successfully in external sports competitions in football and netball. Standards in swimming are very high and the swimming team recently reached the finals in a national contest. Pupils also participate successfully in chess competitions and have recently qualified to compete in a northern regional final.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been exceptional in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. Pupils' performance in English is excellent and that in mathematics is exceptional. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make progress that is excellent in relation to pupils of similar abilities. This high level of progress and attainment is also evident in lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' written work, available standardised measures of progress and curriculum interviews. Less able pupils and those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress because they are very well supported. More able pupils successfully meet the academic challenges provided and make excellent progress throughout the school.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. At all levels, pupils participate with a high degree of engagement in their lessons and work with considerable perseverance and energy to achieve a consistently high standard. There is a learning culture of obvious enthusiasm, and in many lessons energy and endeavour are palpable. Pupils work industriously in lessons and take great care with the way they present their work, whether in writing, mathematics, art or performance.

- 3.6 In many lessons pupils display a mature attitude to working independently, for example by creating information posters on the Tudors. Pupils respond extremely positively to the wide range of extra-curricular activities, participating with enthusiasm. For example, in the Punjabi club pupils were keen to show their books, demonstrating a clear sense of pride in their achievements.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The academic curriculum is stimulating, broad and balanced, in accordance with the school's aims. This is supplemented by a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities, enabling pupils to develop a wide range of skills and interests. The curriculum contains the required elements. In addition to National Curriculum subjects, pupils study French in Years 4, 5 and 6, and Spanish in Years 2 and 3. Creative and expressive subjects, including art, DT, drama and music, are strongly represented, and pupils' high quality artwork is on display around the school. There has been considerable investment in information and communication technology (ICT) resources, which are well utilised through an imaginative curriculum.
- 3.9 Pupils follow a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme, delivered in the curriculum through personal and social development (PSD) and other curriculum subjects, assemblies and pastoral processes. These cover issues such as friendships and personal health. Pupils also improve their knowledge and understanding of British values in PSD and in current affairs lessons through activities such as a mock election and by visiting places of interest such as the Houses of Parliament. Some aspects of the curriculum are taught through cross-curricular themes; a recent topic on the Titanic demonstrated effective and productive links between English, drama, music and DT, and a combined approach in English and history has been adopted to study the Tudors.
- 3.10 Pupils benefit from specialist facilities for music, ICT, art, DT and science, and from subject specialist teachers for PE and music. Specialist teachers also teach English and mathematics from Year 3 and science and humanities from Year 5. Pupils regularly visit the library; they can borrow books to read in school and use reference books in class for research. Pupils are offered an extensive range of PE activities. They use the neighbouring foundation school facilities for swimming, and make very good use of the playing field for games and athletics. Pupils regularly compete in sporting events. Musicians have the opportunity to play in assembly, perform at school concerts and enter competitions. All pupils take part in a drama production every year.
- 3.11 The curriculum is suitable for pupils of all ages, abilities and needs. Curricular planning is thorough. Learning support for pupils with SEND or EAL is extremely effective, and early diagnosis and intervention ensure that appropriately targeted support is delivered. The most able pupils benefit from extension work and extra challenge in lessons and extra-curricular opportunities. Preparation of pupils for entry into their senior schools is meticulous.
- 3.12 Pupils in all year groups can participate in an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school, including drama, Kung Fu, Punjabi and gardening. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, all pupils and the vast majority of parents were very appreciative of the provision. The school regularly enters many different competitions, such as local and national mathematics

challenges, chess tournaments and music festivals. The curriculum is further enriched by a number of activities in school, such as World Book Day, and by visiting artists and authors. Visitors from an international engineering project have worked with pupils on DT and science projects. Strong links have been established with the local community, and both the Mayor and Member of the European Parliament have visited the school. Fund-raising activities are organised to support local charities. The school enjoys links with a local senior school and pupils recently attended a language day. Pupils' experiences are further broadened by a wide range of educational visits to local places of worship, museums and a fire station. In addition, pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their recent residential trip to an adventure centre in Shropshire.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, extremely well-planned teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' high levels of attainment and progress, fully supporting the school's aim of encouraging a sense of curiosity and a passion for learning. Teaching is non-partisan and reflects fundamental British values. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all pupils said that they find their lessons interesting. In all subjects, focus is placed on capturing pupils' imagination and thus inspiring them to use their best endeavours and complete the tasks set successfully. In mathematics, for example, pupils calculated decimal, fraction and percentage equivalents in order to crack a complicated coded message.
- 3.15 Teaching is characterised by expert subject knowledge, matched with an understanding of pupils' needs. The majority of teaching is well paced and topics are introduced clearly, with effective questioning that assesses pupils' understanding. Pupils are encouraged to provide thoughtful responses. Classrooms are well resourced and good use is made of interactive whiteboards, with stimulating and thought-provoking presentations, for example, exploring the historical origins of Humpty Dumpty.
- 3.16 A new policy for marking and assessment has been successfully developed and implemented, thus meeting a recommendation of the previous inspection. The marking of work is thorough, with many useful written comments and targets. In questionnaire responses and interviews, pupils were extremely positive about the guidance they receive from teachers, and all said that their teachers help them to learn. A very small minority of parents indicated in questionnaire responses that they do not feel that homework is set appropriately. Inspection evidence from pupil interviews, scrutiny of work and homework records showed that tasks set for homework are appropriate but that there is some lack of clarity about regularity and completion dates.
- 3.17 Assessment contributes strongly to the excellent progress of the pupils. A range of standardised assessment tasks is analysed most effectively to determine those who are achieving well and to identify those who need support. Pupils' progress is extensively monitored and the results of this enable teachers to plan lessons effectively, ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils with SEND may receive tasks more suited to their ability, individual lessons or targeted support from teaching assistants. For example, in swimming lessons, less confident swimmers follow a carefully adapted progress plan. In questionnaire responses, a few parents did not feel that more able pupils receive effective support. From interviews, work

scrutiny and lesson observations, inspection evidence showed that able pupils are set appropriate challenges and frequently receive extension tasks.

- 3.18 Pupils happily work together in pairs or groups, usefully supporting and challenging each other. For example, in English, pupils worked together to prepare for a debate on various children's rights. At other times, pupils are expected to work independently on tasks. Many lessons start with a challenge, enabling pupils to discover new facts and ideas for themselves. For example, in ICT, pupils were given a robot and had to establish which stimuli were needed to make it move, their findings prompting much delight.
- 3.19 Teachers have very high expectations for pupils. In almost all lessons observed they encouraged exemplary behaviour through firm classroom management, praise and encouragement. All staff know their pupils well and excellent relationships in the classroom are maintained through mutual respect, creating a friendly, family environment that is highly conducive to enjoyable learning.

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 personal development of the pupils is strongly promoted and very successfully meets the school's aims. The pupils are very confident and articulate, and they have very well-rounded personalities for their age. The pupils' spiritual awareness is highly developed through the curriculum and through daily assemblies. Pupils appreciate non-material aspects of life, for example responding sensitively to the cello during an assembly and writing moving imaginary accounts of being a passenger on the Titanic. Pupils are self-aware and offer reflective, considered and emotionally mature responses when questioned about their school.
- 4.3 The pupils have a strong sense of moral awareness, with a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are well mannered and polite to adults and to their peers, understanding the need for rules, whether in school or national legal systems. Pupils respond well to the moral messages delivered in assemblies, such as a recent theme on 'tests and trials'.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. They express themselves well and are responsible, spontaneously offering support to their peers. Pupils develop an understanding of the world through assemblies and the comprehensive PSHEE programme. They maturely debate current social, political or environmental issues and recognise a personal responsibility to act as trustworthy citizens. They contribute to the very effective house system which organises fund-raising events for both local and national charities, and participate in these with enthusiasm.
- 4.5 Pupils have a strong cultural understanding and show great respect for those from other faiths and cultures, including the many represented within the school community. They are tolerant, accepting that people are different. Pupils respond well to carefully chosen resources that stimulate excellent discussions about belief systems and record these in a special book, "My Place in the World".
- 4.6 The pupils develop a suitable awareness of British values and key institutions and public services in England. In doing so, they benefit from visits to local council offices and visits to the school from the mayor and representatives of key public services. Understanding of the British political system is comprehensive; in humanities lessons, pupils learn the significance of debate and democracy, and older pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament and Westminster. Pupils democratically agree class rules. Current affairs lessons allow pupils to discuss major world and political events. The elected school council manages an annual budget, which ensures an appreciation of monetary value.
- 4.7 Pupils leave the school confident, articulate and with an excellent work ethic. Year 6 pupils have a number of responsibilities, and are excellent ambassadors for the school as they act as guides to prospective pupils' parents and staff.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In accordance with the ethos of the school, staff take pride in knowing their pupils extremely well. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents felt that their children are safe and happy in school. Relationships are very positive amongst the pupils themselves, as seen both in lessons and at playtime, when the older pupils act as mentors to their younger peers. In lessons, pupils collaborate well in their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. In their responses to the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils indicated the view that staff do not show concern for them as a person, although they were all confident that they could turn to members of staff if they needed help. In interviews, pupils commented that they feel safe and valued. Inspectors found that pupils are very enthusiastic about the school and a clear sense that they are well known to staff and extremely well supported by them.
- 4.10 Pupils are actively encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle through PSD, and parents are advised as to suitable food items for pupils' packed lunches. Staff monitor lunch boxes and pupils are frequently reminded to drink water. Many opportunities are available at school for healthy exercise at playtime, within the curriculum and during extra-curricular activities.
- 4.11 The school is extremely effective in promoting good behaviour and in countering bullying, including cyber-bullying. The vast majority of parents feel that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. In questionnaire responses, a few parents felt that the school does not deal well with cases of bullying. However, in their questionnaire responses, the vast majority of pupils disagreed with this view. From interviews with pupils and staff and the scrutiny of records, inspectors found clear evidence that should any bullying occur it is appropriately and immediately dealt with. Pupils feel supported within the school and teachers devise interesting ways to remedy friendship issues; for instance, when a few boys were monopolising football at playtime, a football session was arranged which included the whole class, including girls.
- 4.12 A suitable plan is in place to improve educational access for pupils with SEND. The school listens actively to the views of the pupils and carefully considers suggestions raised by the school council, such as a quiet area in the playground. The school council raises money for a number of such initiatives. Ideas from Year 6 were listened to and they are now allowed to use a stairway previously only used by staff.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 The school successfully provides an environment where the welfare, health and safety of all individuals are promoted, in line with its aims. Premises are maintained to a good standard, checks on fabric and equipment are undertaken regularly, and detailed records are kept. Risk assessment and safety policies are implemented effectively. A comprehensive fire safety policy includes a regular risk assessment. Fire drills for the whole school take place at least termly.
- 4.15 Throughout the school, procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorously implemented and understood by all staff. These have recently been reviewed and updated to follow the most recent official guidance. Designated staff receive suitable safeguarding training from the local authority. All staff receive child protection training regularly and this is frequently reviewed at staff meetings. All new staff and volunteers receive induction training that includes safeguarding pupils. Staff have a clear code of conduct and pupils are educated on keeping themselves safe, including sensible use of the internet. The 'digital deeds' which pupils have written to prioritise keeping themselves and their families safe are prominently displayed. Recruitment procedures are thorough. The necessary pre-recruitment checks are undertaken on all new staff, volunteers and governors, and these are correctly recorded.
- 4.16 Suitable facilities are available for those pupils who are injured or become unwell at school. Staff are well informed about pupils with various medical conditions or SEND. All accidents or injuries are recorded and parents are duly notified. The school has a detailed first-aid policy, and an appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid and paediatric first aid. The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors provide highly effective oversight of the school and are most successful in enabling it to fulfil its aims. They share a common strong enthusiasm in providing the best possible education for pupils. Many are parents of former or current pupils and several were pupils themselves, thus having particular insight into the working of the school and contributing greatly to its sense of family. The governing body offers a wide range of professional skills and through a set of committees it diligently discharges its responsibilities. An innovative system of subject-linked governors carefully monitors educational standards; these governors visit classes and attend lessons. Prudent financial planning has enabled suitable investment in staff, accommodation and new resources. Governors are well supported by the officers of the Queen Mary's Schools Foundation.
- 5.3 The responsibility for safeguarding and child protection is discharged conscientiously and several governors have received training from the local authority. A named governor is experienced in safeguarding matters and works closely with leadership, including that of the EYFS, readily providing both support and advice. The full governing body undertakes the required annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 5.4 Governors are well informed by detailed termly reports from leadership. From these they agree and share a common vision for future development. Appraisal systems monitor the overall performance of the school, establish areas for development and provide firm but sympathetic guidance to ensure that these are achieved. Regular performance management review is used effectively to hone the effectiveness of all managers and leaders. This meets a recommendation of the previous inspection.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management are extremely effective in providing strong pastoral and academic direction, in order to fulfil the school's aims. All members of the leadership team are highly committed to the pastoral development of the pupils and contribute greatly to the sense of family which is a strong feature of the school. Pupils are valued as individuals, praised for their successes and kindly mentored if their behaviour does not always match the school's high standards. Under strong leadership, pupils are encouraged to respect others within a community of diverse cultural backgrounds, and to understand and utilise the democratic process. Pupils speak warmly of the individual support and guidance that they receive from the leadership team.
- 5.7 Leadership and management regularly review both the content and implementation of school policies, including those for welfare, health and safety, to ensure that they meet the most recent requirements. They maintain high standards for the safeguarding of pupils and ensure that staff are suitably and regularly trained. They

carry out accurate self-evaluation and set appropriate priorities, ensuring, through evaluation of the school development plan, that these are achieved.

- 5.8 Leadership and management diligently discharge their delegated responsibilities for educational provision. Regular reviews of academic policies take place and these have recently been carefully updated following changes nationally. In response to the recommendations of the previous inspection, comprehensive monitoring procedures are now well established, under efficient and dynamic academic management. These have developed the understanding of subject co-ordinators in order to enhance academic practice and procedures. A comprehensive system of curriculum monitoring, development and evaluation has been introduced which focuses positively on raising standards in teaching and learning. A programme of academic assessment is in place which closely monitors pupil performance in order to direct and improve educational provision for individuals and, when identified, within subjects. Monitoring of the oldest pupils has a focus on preparation and guidance for the transfer to secondary education and has proved most successful, contributing greatly to the overall exceptional achievements of the pupils.
- 5.9 In recent years, leadership has been highly successful in securing the appointment of well-qualified and inspirational teachers who have made a significant contribution in encouraging the pupils' love of learning. All required checks are carried out prior to staff starting work and the details are recorded accurately in a central register. A comprehensive appraisal system is now well established and performance management has proved useful in refining the effectiveness of teaching staff. The process includes self-assessment that informs subject development as well as the continuing professional development of staff, for which there is an appropriate budget. Subject co-ordinators are closely involved with the school development plan and know that their opinions are valued, reflecting the vision of leadership to improve educational provision within the ethos of a supportive whole-school family atmosphere.
- 5.10 The school maintains excellent links with parents. Those who responded to the questionnaire and those met informally during the inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents very much appreciate the high expectations for good behaviour and the mutual respect promoted by all teachers. The parents of new pupils are welcomed at a meeting to which teachers and the parents of current pupils are invited so that they quickly feel part of the school community. Parents receive plentiful information about the school and their children's activities, either on the school's website, or by email or text message. In addition, homework diaries and reading records provide a ready means of home to school communication.
- 5.11 Parents receive a detailed report about their children's work and progress at the end of each summer term, and those with children in Years 3 to 6 also receive a short autumn term report and a brief mid-year report in the spring term. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents were not fully satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspectors found that written reports are detailed and thorough but that a new method of measuring progress is not yet clearly understood by all parents. Parents are also kept informed by a well-structured programme of parents' information evenings. In September, a parents' induction evening is held for each year group. In addition, a meeting takes place every two years for the parents of all pupils to explain the mathematics programme. For the parents of EYFS children, a meeting is held on alternate years to explain reading and writing strategies. In the autumn and spring terms, consultation evenings are held with class teachers, and for older pupils, individual

subject teachers. After parents receive the annual reports in the summer, an open evening is held when they have the opportunity to discuss the reports and meet their children's new teachers. Staff are also happy to meet parents by pre-arrangement if they have a concern.

- 5.12 The leadership and many teachers are available at the start and end of each day in the playground, while parents of children in the EYFS are welcomed into the classrooms at that time. Parents are invited into school if there is a difficulty and the school handles any incidents or concerns with care, in accordance with its policies. A few parents indicated in response to the questionnaire that did not feel the school has handled their concerns well. From the scrutiny of records and discussions with managers, inspectors found no evidence to support this view. When concerns are brought to the attention of the school, they are investigated thoroughly in accordance with stated procedures, an appropriate response made and detailed notes kept. Any necessary information is sent, when necessary, to a relevant authority.
- 5.13 Almost all parents expressed great satisfaction with the many opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school. The vibrant parents' association raises funds for the school through many events, such as a Christmas fair and summer garden party. Parents are encouraged to give talks in school and to help on school trips; they also volunteer to assist at coffee mornings and some clubs, and offer much loyal support in many ways. Many are former pupils themselves and very much appreciate the school's family atmosphere, to which they make their own significant contribution.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 6.1 The provision is outstanding in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. The educational programmes are exciting and often unusual. For example, children from three to five demonstrated differences between African and Irish dancing while children under three practised a simple yoga routine. In Reception, children investigated how many interesting three-dimensional shapes and models they could make from large straws. Children of all abilities are fully included and are stimulated and extended at appropriate levels by the activities. Those who need more support receive expert help so that they progress well. As a result, all children reach the levels of development typical for their age and some exceed them.
- 6.2 Staff are experienced and use both interesting information and searching questions that intrigue and enthuse children and encourage them to develop skills and to think independently, equipping them to respond to further challenges in the next stage of their education. Staff provide open-ended opportunities that foster creativity and critical thinking, and establish a good balance of activities that they lead and those initiated by children. This fulfils a recommendation of the previous inspection in 2012. Children work and play outside daily, but there is no protection against sun or rain outside Reception. Children learn about the wider world through trips, such as to a local nature centre. Those under four were fascinated to watch ice that they had made melt, while in Reception the children made water patterns and watched them disappear as they dried.
- 6.3 The school greatly values its close relations with parents, who are welcomed into the setting at the start and end of each day, and who are encouraged to share in their children's learning through the varied home-school tasks that are set every Friday. Parents receive detailed information about their children's progress at regular times during the year, but this is not provided sufficiently frequently. Parents particularly appreciate the warm, welcoming atmosphere that surrounds their children.

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

- 6.4 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Key people are experienced and work extremely hard in close-knit teams. They demonstrate excellent relationships and place warm trust in the children, with high expectations for good behaviour. Children enjoy school, form friendships with adults and each other, and gain the confidence to try exciting new activities as they are encouraged to develop independence, explore their surroundings and use their imagination. Staff ensure that children know how to keep safe and that they start to understand the benefits of exercise. Children under three begin to manage their own hygiene needs while those from three to five understand the need for washing hands; in Reception, children do so without prompting. Snacks in school are healthy, as are most lunches brought from home. Staff ensure that children have ample water to drink during the day.
- 6.5 The setting pays great attention to ensuring that children pass from one year to another happily. Visits are arranged from children's new teachers, together with

sessions in new classrooms, so that transition is easy and successful. Children are enthusiastic and savour new experiences with confidence.

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

- 6.6 The leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding and governors take keen, knowledgeable interest in the setting. The leadership is experienced and enthusiastic, continually moving the setting forward. Practice and educational programmes are evaluated regularly and improvements made where appropriate. Planning is detailed and is closely linked to assessment, which ensures that tasks challenge individuals appropriately; at present assessment findings are not shared sufficiently frequently with parents. Teaching is monitored regularly and staff observe practice in other rooms, and where possible in other settings, which enriches their own practice. Priorities and concerns are discussed in regular staff meetings that strengthen the close working relationships between teachers and their assistants, who all feel they are members of a successful, supportive team. Staff are fully trained in health and safety and in safeguarding procedures, and they understand the latest welfare requirements. The school ensures that staff have appropriate professional training, which is highly valued. Information from courses is shared with all so that its positive impact on children's learning and development extends throughout the setting.
- 6.7 The setting has productive partnerships with children's parents, which it works hard to maintain and strengthen. It ensures ready contact with external agencies when children require extra support.

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

- 6.8 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are outstanding. Staff have a shared responsibility and understanding of the need to give high priority to ensuring that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met and that children are secure both physically and emotionally. Leadership and management are highly effective in ensuring that the success of the setting is evaluated constantly and improvements put in place.
- 6.9 Children enter the setting with a wide range of abilities and they make rapid progress across all the areas of learning. By the end of Reception, the large majority of children attain most of the Early Learning Goals and some achieve beyond them. Children under three count back from five to one with increasing confidence. They start to recognise their names and occasionally letter sounds. The most able three year olds identify "small" numbers and order them correctly, while those needing additional support understand that a number of objects remains constant despite being divided into smaller groups. Children from three to five know simple phonic sounds and build short words like 'pin'. By the end of their year in Reception, children count confidently to and back from given numbers such as 25 and perform simple addition sums, as well as recognising the properties of common 2-dimensional shapes. They read simple text with understanding and use phonics to write simple sentences. Children's speech becomes increasingly clear and fluent as they learn to express ideas and explain themselves.
- 6.10 All children, including those with SEND or EAL, are fully included in all activities and are challenged and supported appropriately. They are happy and confident, their behaviour is exemplary, and they develop warm friendships with the staff who care for them and with each other. Their emotional development is outstanding.

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

Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.