



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CHARD SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Chard School

Full Name of School	Chard School
DfE Number	933/6165
EYFS Number	EY368421
Registered Charity Number	310219
Address	Chard School Monmouth House Chard Somerset TA20 1QA
Telephone Number	01460 63234
Fax Number	01460 68988
Email Address	head@chardschool.co.uk
Head	Mrs Jane Bruce
Chair of Governors	Mr Charles Denman
Age Range	2 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	107
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (63 boys; 44 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 19 5-11: 74 3-5 (EYFS): 14
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 107
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	11 Jun 2013 to 14 Jun 2013

PREFACE

This inspection was conducted to assess the suitability of Chard School for membership of Independent Schools' Association. It follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous inspection by Ofsted was in June 2010.

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

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Chard School is an independent preparatory day school for boys and girls aged between two and 11 years. The school, which in its present form was established in 1972, occupies a series of listed buildings in the centre of Chard, Somerset. The original Tudor construction was built as a Manor House and became a school in 1671. Within the grounds is an Elizabethan chapel, a gym and a purpose-built science laboratory. The school is administered as a charity by a board of up to 12 governors, who have a range of skills and expertise. The head was appointed in April 2012. Recent changes to the educational provision include a complete overhaul of the information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, including a mobile suite of laptops and wireless free internet throughout the school.
- 1.2 At the time of inspection there were 107 pupils on roll, 74 pupils in Years 1 to 6, and 33 in the EYFS, of whom 25 were part time. There were eight classes, one each for Nursery through to Year 6. Almost all pupils are of British origin. The majority are drawn from business and professional backgrounds and most live within a 15 mile radius of the school. Pupils leave at the end of Year 6 to continue their education in maintained grammar or comprehensive schools, with some transferring to independent day schools in the surrounding counties.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the school is generally above the national average, with a range of abilities represented. The school has identified 14 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and all of these pupils receive learning support. No pupils have either English as an additional language or a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.4 Within an ethos based on Christian principles that focuses on the traditional values of hard work, good manners and discipline, the school aims to promote a happy, caring atmosphere, which encourages the pursuit of excellence and enables each pupil to develop his or her skills.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Symes	Reception
Horner	Year 1
Monmouth	Year 2
Wyndham	Year 3
Harris	Year 4
Lower Cerdic	Year 5
Upper Cerdic	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 In Years 1-6 the quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent and in the EYFS the overall quality and standards of the setting are good. Pupils of all abilities are highly successful in their learning and personal development and the school successfully meets its aim to enable each pupil to be both educationally stimulated and challenged. The pupils' excellent standards of achievement in academic work are also reflected in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They benefit from an excellent curriculum whose breadth and richness prepares them thoroughly for their senior schools. The EYFS makes good provision for the children who attend. Pupils are confident and independent with extremely well-developed skills in literacy and numeracy. They make consistently rapid progress. The quality of teaching is excellent and much stimulating practice was observed during the inspection. Support for pupils with SEND is good and the more able pupils are offered suitably challenging tasks. Assessment is appropriate and effective in tracking pupils' progress and needs. Since the previous Ofsted inspection for the EYFS, the setting has made progress in the monitoring of teaching and assessment.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development throughout the school is excellent. It is supported by strong pastoral care. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils develop extremely well spiritually, have an excellent sense of morality and strong social awareness. They have a good appreciation of how cultural and religious diversity enriches life. Secure relationships are built on mutual trust and respect, within a caring environment. Pupils welcome opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and the care they show for one another is excellent. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all pupils praised the extra-curricular programme, the opportunities to be independent and the help provided by their teachers.
- 2.3 Good governance ensures that pupils are well educated and the governors are committed to the success and development of the school. Leadership of the school is good and the small senior management team has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The implementation of the many policies and the monitoring procedures for all aspects of school life results in a considerable workload for the current management. A school improvement plan is in place, setting out clear priorities for the year ahead, although it does not provide sufficient detailed information about the early years setting or about long term developments for the future of the whole school. Statutory responsibilities are generally fulfilled effectively, however, there has been some lack of rigour with regard to safe recruitment practice. The school has now implemented all necessary checks. Non-compliant regulations regarding toilet provision for pupils who are ill and availability of hot water in the boys' washrooms are yet to be addressed. Excellent links exist between parents and the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, an overwhelming majority of parents confirmed that they are highly satisfied with the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- Implement all required recruitment checks on staff before they begin work [Part 4, paragraph 19.(2)(a) and 19(3), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7, under Welfare, health and safety].
 - ensure there is suitable accommodation for the short term care for sick and injured pupils which is near to a toilet facility [Part 5 paragraph 23B (1) (b) under Premises and Accommodation].
 - ensure washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot water [Part 5 paragraph 23F (1) (b) under Premises and Accommodation at Schools].
- 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) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Set up a more clearly defined management structure and identify roles and responsibilities of its members.
 2. Extend the scope of the school development planning to include long term development targets for the future of the school.
 3. Produce a detailed plan for the early years setting which clearly prioritises areas for development.

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 is excellent overall.
- 3.2 In line with its aims, the school is successful in producing a happy, caring atmosphere, which encourages the pursuit of excellence. In Years 1-6 pupils achieve excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum and in a varied range of extra-curricular activities. Their achievement in English and mathematics is excellent. As pupils move through the school, they read and write with increasing fluency and for a widening range of purposes. They have excellent writing skills, their free writing is imaginative and they display a mature vocabulary. Pupils demonstrate high levels of speaking and listening, as was witnessed in a rehearsal for the end-of-year play where pupils practised their singing, dancing and acting skills in readiness for a performance to their parents. Older pupils are highly articulate and use group and class discussions to present critical and thoughtful ideas. Mathematical development is excellent. Pupils manipulate numbers competently and apply their knowledge skilfully in a range of investigative tasks. Pupils' reasoning skills are very good, particularly when asking searching questions of their teachers. Pupils produce a high standard in art and design and their work is often displayed in local exhibitions. Their secure grasp of ICT skills enables them to organise and present their work effectively.
- 3.3 Pupils display high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons and across a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Achievement in sport is high and teams perform to a good standard against local and regional opposition. Three pupils have reached national level in the Independent Schools' Association athletics championships. Pupils have considerable talent in music and they take great pleasure in participating individually and communally in a range of musical activities, with over a third of the pupils gaining success in learning to play musical instruments.
- 3.4 Overall, results in national tests at age 11 have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools. The work the pupils are given in many subjects, notably English, mathematics and science, is considerably more challenging than the National Curriculum. Inspection evidence from observations of lessons, scrutiny of work and discussions with individual pupils and staff confirms this judgement. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils identified as having SEND benefit from a high level of support which enables them to make significant improvements as was particularly evident in their free writing. Those identified as gifted or talented are often offered appropriate extension activities which enable them to make rapid progress. Pupils are successful in gaining places to a senior school of their choice with a good number demonstrating high achievement in winning academic and all-round scholarships.
- 3.5 The pupils' good overall achievement is supported by their keen attitudes to learning, their positive behaviour, and the excellent relationships enjoyed between themselves and their teachers. Pupils throughout the school are eager, inquisitive and diligent, because of the high expectations and encouragement they receive from their teachers. They set to work quickly and efficiently, whether they are working as individuals or in pairs or larger groups.

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

- 3.6 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The school offers a broad curriculum which is highly effective in its coverage of all areas of learning. The school prides itself on catering for the whole child both academically and socially so that the pupils meet the requirements for entry into secondary education. This enables pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make swift progress. Schemes of work, including a detailed personal, social and health programme (PSHE) support learning effectively. Specialist teachers enhance provision in the teaching of music, physical education (PE) and games, and French to Years 1 & 2. This continues into Year 3 and above with the addition of maths, science, ICT, art and humanities, and from Year 4 Spanish for all children. Science is taught as three separate subjects in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Creative, expressive and practical subjects are central to the curriculum and the pupils consider the lessons to be fun and report that they make rapid progress.
- 3.8 The curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs and is most successful in supporting the school's aims to provide access and opportunity for all the children who attend the school. The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. All pupils are screened in Year 1 using a diagnostic profile and are then offered additional support or extension tasks as appropriate, supported through small class sizes and an effectively varied curriculum.
- 3.9 The delivery of the curriculum is enhanced by resources such as the well-equipped science room, extensive physical education and games facilities and the newly refurbished ICT suite. The library is well stocked with both fiction and non-fiction books and located in a prominent position in the school. These specialist facilities improve the pupils' access to the curriculum contributing to the excellent delivery.
- 3.10 The extra-curricular programme enables the school to meet its aims to broaden and develop aspects beyond the classroom. Clubs and activities are centred on sports such as cricket, karate and tag-rugby, which occur daily and are well-attended, and academic interests such as chess, languages and computers. Visitors to the school enhance curricular development and add realism to a range of subjects. A most plausible Henry VIII was observed during the inspection delighting the older pupils with tales from Tudor times. Many exciting day and residential trips further enrich the curriculum. Visits to museums and places of worship enable pupils to learn about the local community and pupils also participate in many local events such as planting a flower tub for Chard's flower competition. They are given the opportunity to raise funds for charities both at home and abroad which assist in the development of cooperative, organisational and leadership skills appropriate to their age. Recent activities include a bake sale, an auction of chicks hatched at school and a duck race.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The overall quality of teaching is excellent
- 3.12 Pupils' high levels of achievement are attained largely as a result of the excellent teaching that is highly effective in promoting pupils' rapid progress. Teaching throughout the school provides activities that enthuse the pupils, so that learning is enjoyable and productive.

- 3.13 Teachers have high expectations and an extremely secure knowledge of their subject areas. Teaching in lessons is consistently well planned, and almost always exhibits fun, pace and challenge. In the best teaching, teachers use an imaginative range of methods to keep pupils interested and engaged. In an art lesson, teaching inspired pupils as they investigated form and shadow to sketch and make mono-prints of gargoyles. Pupils apply themselves with concentration and effort, and behave extremely well. They are given a high level of personal attention, and benefit greatly from working in an environment where hard work is praised and celebrated. Teachers create an atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and are not afraid to ask for clarification when it is needed. In interviews, pupils reported that their teachers were kind and friendly and helped them to learn. A variety of teaching methods provide many opportunities for the pupils to work successfully in pairs or groups. In the very small minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, a lack of pace fails to maintain pupils' interests.
- 3.14 More able pupils are frequently given challenging work. Staff work closely with parents and external agencies to secure appropriate support for those children with SEND, for whom suitable targets, which are regularly reviewed, are recorded on individual provision maps. In addition to the specialist support timetabled for these pupils, teaching assistants provide effective additional help both in and out of the classroom.
- 3.15 Small class sizes enable teachers to give pupils individual feedback and support as the lesson is progressing and helps the pupils to move their learning forward. Throughout the school, appropriate assessment tools are used to gain information about the ability levels of each class. Staff monitor pupils' learning carefully through formal testing and informal observations, both of which provide an accurate record of pupils' development. A scrutiny of assessment results by the leadership ensures that pupils' progress is tracked appropriately. All work is marked accurately and the best examples include targets, positive comments and guidance to pupils as to how they may improve their work.
- 3.16 Teachers organise their classrooms well and most use colourful wall displays to provide attractive environments for learning. Those teachers who have access to interactive whiteboards use them regularly and effectively as visual aids. Worksheets are used well where needed, and the homework that is set reinforces the importance of English and mathematics within the curriculum. Some pupils reported in the pre-inspection questionnaire that there is too much homework, but inspection evidence did not support this view.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' exhibit a high degree of personal development, in accordance with the school's aim that pupils should be committed to positive attitudes and consideration for others. They are polite, friendly and welcoming and they show respect for themselves and each other. They are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education and they leave school as confident and well-balanced young people.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are extremely self-aware and their high levels of confidence are developed through the many opportunities they have to organise and lead assemblies, take part in large scale concerts and dramatic productions and in sporting and other local events and competitions. An assembly focused on the celebration of achievements in art, music, sport, good conduct and schoolwork, and was linked to the theme of perseverance and determination. Pupils appreciate and are sensitive to the non-material aspects of life through discussions in PSHE, by following Christian values and through talks from a good range of visiting speakers. The pupils are emotionally mature for their age and are able to discuss issues well above age related expectations.
- 4.4 Strong moral awareness is evident, based on the pupils' excellent behaviour and their mature sense of right and wrong. Pupils are kind and cooperative and they communicate positively with each other and with their teachers. They have strong opinions which promote fair play and equality. There is evidence of the pupils' having good understanding of global issues, as was seen in a geography lesson where they were discussing the need to reduce food wastage. The school is visited by the local police who assist the pupils in developing their understanding of acceptable behaviour within society.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is excellent. They willingly accept responsibility as monitors and they are proud to contribute to the society of the school. Pupils are voted on to the school council and they take this position most seriously, formally reporting back to their peers. A weekend residential trip to a local outward bound centre provides opportunities to develop team building and to show determination in meeting various challenges. Many charities both locally and abroad are supported and helping the less fortunate is given high priority. Most recently, pupils have supported a charity based on care for children with autism, sensory issues and extreme behaviour. Pupils learn about public institutions and the rule of law through their PSHE studies, whilst their economic development is reflected in their geography studies, where they consider sustainability in underdeveloped countries.
- 4.6 The cultural development of the pupils is good. They show a keen respect for other faiths and cultures, although opportunities for first hand experiences are limited within the local area. Pupils learn through case studies of life in different countries and have opportunities to compare these cultures with their own in the Western world. They welcome frequent visitors from local Christian churches and have celebrated Diwali. During the inspection pupils were studying life in India, focusing on many different aspects from food, clothing and health, to education and working opportunities.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 Form tutors are primarily responsible for the pastoral well-being of the pupils. As the school is small, staff know all the pupils extremely well and encourage them to take advantage of the breadth of opportunities available. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and staff are totally involved in supporting pupils with their work or with their relationships with others. Pertinent information regarding any concerns about a pupil is quickly disseminated to all teaching staff either verbally, or via email and notices in the staffroom.
- 4.9 Healthy eating is encouraged through the recently introduced hot lunches, PSHE and science. Drinking water is available throughout the school. Pupils understand the benefits of regular exercise and the school's PE programme ensures that they have excellent opportunities to be healthy. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.10 Staff are guided by comprehensive anti-bullying, discipline and behaviour policies. Pupils' excellent behaviour is rewarded with house points which accumulate to the acquisition of merit badges. Pupils reported that bullying is not an issue and any unkind behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively. In the pre-inspection questionnaire some pupils claimed that teachers are not always fair in the way that they give sanctions, but this view was not supported by inspectors from the evidence available or by pupils in their interviews. Sanctions are used rarely but appropriate procedures are in place should the need arise.
- 4.11 There are opportunities in PSHE lessons for pupils to discuss issues and to share opinions. In the questionnaire some pupils felt that the school does not always ask for their opinions on matters nor respond to them. However, in interviews pupils reported that tutor time provides an ideal opportunity for open discussion. Furthermore, pupils articulate their views competently through the school council. Pupils care for each other well, offering support during lessons and at play.

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

- 4.12 The school makes good arrangements to secure pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- 4.13 Good safeguarding arrangements have regard to official guidance and a rigorous child protection policy applies to the whole school. All staff know the child protection procedures and they have regularly updated training. Those with specific responsibilities are trained to a higher level. The school has strong links with the local authority, which ensures that it is able to give very high priority to the protection of children throughout the school. Recruitment procedures have improved in recent years and the checks to ensure the suitability of staff are now mostly in place. The recording of these checks has lacked some attention to detail, but the school is now aware of the correct methodology.
- 4.14 Detailed arrangements secure the health and safety of pupils throughout the school, and the comprehensive health and safety document is regularly reviewed and updated. The fire safety manual provides comprehensive guidance and fire practices are regularly implemented and recorded. Other necessary checks such as the testing of call points are carried out diligently and alarms and fire extinguishers are well-maintained. Risk assessments are prepared meticulously for the school premises and activities on tours, visits and trips. All members of staff are trained in

first aid and an appropriate number have a higher level qualification. A satisfactory first aid policy is supplemented by a medicines policy which outlines appropriate protocols for the administration and recording of medicines. However, the current medical room does not have a toilet in close proximity and there is no hot water in the boys' washbasins. The school is aware that these are both regulatory requirements. Pupils are supervised at all times during the school day. All health and safety arrangements take full account of pupils with SEND. Admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and stored appropriately.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 The governors have a clear understanding of what the school is trying to achieve and what the constraints are upon it. Governors offer an extensive range of expertise and experience, and many are past pupils and past parents or have long-standing links with the school. They are therefore in a strong position to set appropriate aims and values in keeping with the school's ethos. Through a committee structure the governors take full responsibility for the financial aspects of the school and the school's educational provision, as they oversee staffing, accommodation, resources and pastoral matters. Designated governors take specific responsibility for EYFS, and safeguarding and they attend appropriate training for these roles.
- 5.3 The chair of governors is in regular contact with the head and provides valuable advice and support. The head prepares full reports for the board twice each term and these provide detailed information about the school's successes and challenges for the future. Consequently, governors are well informed about the work of the school and its priorities. Governors attend the school for special events such as concerts and performances, although regular visits during the school day prove difficult for many of the board members.
- 5.4 The governing body discharges its statutory duties for safeguarding and an annual review is formally undertaken. Health and safety issues are appropriately managed through the designated committee and a competent person assists the board in these matters. Oversight of regulatory compliance is generally effective, although the monitoring of safe recruitment procedures has lacked rigour in the past and non-compliant regulations regarding toilet provision for pupils who are ill and availability of hot water in the boys' washrooms are yet to be addressed.

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 school successfully meets its aim of enabling each pupil to develop his or her skills, whilst being both educationally stimulated and challenged. Strong educational direction is being set by the head, who has been in post for just one year. The small senior management team has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It is effective in setting a purposeful sense of direction across a range of school activities and has introduced many new initiatives which have contributed significantly to the pupils' academic progress and personal development.
- 5.7 Weekly meetings are scheduled to monitor policies, procedures and practices, as well as discuss and implement new initiatives. The leadership is also responsible for checking compliance with regulatory requirements in all sections of the school. This amounts to a considerable workload within the existing management structure.

- 5.8 The senior team has developed an effective and detailed plan for improvement in which priorities have been identified along with the names of staff taking responsibility. It includes clear criteria for judging success, the timescales for completion and outlines a range of improvements which will enhance the educational experiences of the pupils. The plan is currently only for one year, however, and lacks a rolling programme of projected developments for the next few years.
- 5.9 Whole school policies provide practical and achievable guidance for staff. A successful system for the annual appraisal of staff is in its first year and many members of staff have already been observed in their teaching role. A follow-up professional dialogue provides a forum for discussion of target-setting. In-service training is being introduced, but is not yet fully embedded into the school's systems. Planning documents and schemes of work are mostly comprehensive, although in a few subjects the information is less detailed. Recruitment procedures are generally effective. The school successfully retains and recruits suitable staff. At the time of the inspection not all recruitment procedures had been undertaken rigorously but when this was pointed out the school corrected the situation immediately. The central register of appointments is now completed accurately and fully. Not all staff have job descriptions and the arrangements for the induction of new staff are not yet in place. All members of staff have received the required training in safeguarding and in many other aspects of welfare, health and safety.
- 5.10 Teaching and classroom support staff are deployed effectively and they make a good contribution to pupils' learning and welfare. Secretarial, administrative and other non-teaching staff fully understand their roles and play an active part in supporting pupils.
- 5.11 Links with parents are excellent. In the questionnaire almost all parents were complimentary about their children's progress, the curriculum and the range of extra-curricular links and the quality of the pastoral help provided to pupils. A large majority reported that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.12 The school maintains positive and constructive relationships with parents and responds to any concerns immediately. An open-door policy is operated and the head is available to speak to parents throughout the school day. The school's complaints policy is compliant.
- 5.13 Parents have numerous opportunities to be actively involved in the life of the school as well as the work and progress of their children. They are invited to class and celebration assemblies, choral and orchestral concerts, plays and social events. There are regular parents' evenings, new parents' meetings, secondary transfer interviews and invitations to the annual prize giving and sports day.
- 5.14 Important information is easily accessed by parents via the newly designed website. The half termly bulletin provides news of school trips and visits, sporting successes and dates for the diary. More information is available via the school prospectus, by letter, through informative weekly newsletters and parent notice boards; this fulfils all regulatory requirements.
- 5.15 An enthusiastic and active parents group is involved in organising a wide range of social and fundraising events for the school, these include a children's film afternoon, a trip to the pantomime and two annual school fairs. A two day curriculum event covering science and personal, social and health education has been sponsored by the parents to further enhance the pupils' learning experience.

- 5.16 Regular and informative written reports across the school, which have recently been revised, keep parents well informed of pupils' progress and make reference to effort, attainment and homework. They do not yet include individual targets for pupils identifying their specific areas for development, although this is in the development plan for the next stage in the reporting review.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 6.1 The setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. The broad educational programmes children experience give them many opportunities to develop a range of skills and to express their ideas with confidence and with evident enjoyment. The use of technology, however, is not yet sufficiently developed. Children under the age of three are well supported in their personal, social and emotional development as well as in expressive arts and design. The use of themes is highly successful in providing older children with comprehensive coverage of the EYFS curriculum. Teacher-led activities successfully promote children's learning and the many opportunities for children to initiate activities for themselves in the classroom further enhances their learning experience. All children, including those with SEND, reach expected levels of development while the more able exceed expectations. Children are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 6.2 Teachers, including specialists in French, music and PE, demonstrate high expectations of children in terms of behaviour and learning, and they successfully motivate them and engage them in very well planned activities. Teachers work closely with parents to ensure that children settle quickly and feel secure in the setting. Each child is allocated a key person who is a point of welcome and contact, supporting the child in school as well as liaising regularly with parents. There is high parent/teacher liaison with a 'WOW' board where parents are encouraged to list tasks that pupils have mastered.
- 6.3 Parents are kept well informed about children's achievements and progress, speaking to teachers at termly parents' evenings and informally during the school day. Written reports for the youngest children provide parents with information regarding their child's progress and the next steps to support learning and development, while the summary report for children in the final term in Reception indicates a child's level of development assessed against the Early Learning Goals.

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

- 6.4 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Practice ensures that all children, including the youngest and those in need of additional support, enjoy positive relationships with adults and other children, forming secure emotional attachments. Children are very well cared for. They are developing independence, can play co-operatively and enjoy what they are doing. They explore their surroundings using their vivid imagination in a wide range of learning experiences. A high priority is placed on children's happiness. High standards of behaviour are expected of all children and they understand why it is important to consider the feelings of others, and the need for co-operation, respect and sharing. Children eat nutritious snacks daily; they enjoy their packed lunches and drink water frequently throughout the day. Children have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and the need for physical activity.

- 6.5 Children in Nursery are successfully encouraged to be independent and can put on their coats with a little support. The older children in Reception can change independently into PE kit and also manage their own hygiene and personal needs confidently. At each stage of transition within the setting, including moving up to Year 1, arrangements are very good and children are very well prepared.

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

- 6.6 Governance, leadership and management are good. The designated governor for the EYFS visits the school from time to time to observe how the setting works and how the children progress and develop, reporting back to the board of governors. The setting is welcoming, safe and secure and safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Staff have received appropriate child protection training and have a clear understanding of health and safety procedures. Arrangements for the checking of suitability of staff in the EYFS are appropriate. Some minor health and safety issues were identified within the setting at the time of the inspection, but the leadership was swift to take action and resolve these matters. Teachers trained in paediatric first aid ensure children's medical needs and any accidents are dealt with effectively. At present the whole school development plan does not adequately take account of the priorities of the EYFS and the system of self-evaluation is insufficient to identify the setting's priorities and to set targets for future improvement. An effective system of staff appraisal has been introduced which encourages the continuous professional development of staff. Recently introduced initiatives to improve the monitoring of teaching and assessment, are ensuring that progress is being made in meeting this recommendation from the previous Ofsted inspection. Positive links have been established with the local authority and teachers participate in the local authority's moderation of the profile scores. A positive and effective relationship has been established with parents, who in the questionnaire expressed strong support of the setting.

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

- 6.7 The quality and standards are good. The children, including those with SEND, make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points.
- 6.8 Children in Nursery have excellent listening skills and can follow a story with keen interest, participating with synchronised actions as appropriate. They can identify initial sounds in familiar words and are using their phonetic knowledge to sound simple words as was observed during an excellent phonics session. They can recognise and count out numbers to 10.
- 6.9 In Reception children are extremely confident and highly articulate. They are able to read high frequency words by sight and can blend letters to read unfamiliar words accurately. Most can write key words, whilst the most able can write short independent sentences and are beginning to use capital letters and full stops. They are confident recognising and ordering numbers to 20 and understand maths vocabulary, for example 'more than' and 'less than'. By the end of the Reception year the more able children reach standards beyond the national expectation. Children are self-assured and confident, trust adults at school and feel secure and happy.
- 6.10 The requirements needed for the safeguarding and welfare of children have been met. The head of the setting and staff demonstrate a commitment to evaluating

practice, but at present do not have an effective development plan for managing continuous improvement.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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 what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.