



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**IPSWICH PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Ipswich Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Ipswich Preparatory School</b>
DfE Number	<b>935/6039</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>310493</b>
Address	<b>Ipswich Preparatory School 3 Ivry Street Ipswich Suffolk IP1 3QW</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01473 282800</b>
Fax Number	<b>01473 40067</b>
Email Address	<b>prephead@ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Amanda Childs</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Karl Daniels</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>309</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (179 boys; 130 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 EYFS: 0            5-11: 244 3-5 EYFS: 65</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>07 May 2013 to 10 May 2013</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2008

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Diane Gardiner	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Belinda Canham	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS / ISA school)
Mr Giles Delaney	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathleen Hayes	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Eithne Webster	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Founded in 1883, Ipswich Preparatory School is an independent, co-educational day school providing for pupils from the age of rising three to eleven years. It forms part of Ipswich School, a day and boarding school, the senior part of which provides for pupils of eleven to eighteen years of age. The preparatory and senior schools share common aims and objectives and have the same governing body. Across the age range the school aims to encourage its pupils to become balanced, confident and considerate individuals by helping them to extend their academic horizons and equip them with personal skills, enabling them to work and relax within a spirit of service to others.
- 1.2 All sections of the school are situated on one site and share facilities such as a large school hall and specialist facilities for the arts, science and technology. It also has the use of some of the senior school facilities for sport, physical and outdoor education, swimming, performing arts and dining. The school grounds include grassed and hard areas with a wildlife area and car park. Pupils generally come from professional and business families from Ipswich town and the wider community, with some travelling considerable distances.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection the management structure of the school has been reviewed and developed. The senior management team is now supported by a senior leadership team and leadership and monitoring roles have been structured for subject leaders. The process of assessment and tracking has been strengthened for all pupils.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, the school had a total of 309 pupils on role of which 65 were accommodated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A significant number of pupils join the school through the Nursery at the age of three, with smaller numbers joining other year groups throughout the school with more formal assessment from Years 2 to 6.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average with a notable proportion having an ability that is well above average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 27 pupils as requiring support with some aspect of their learning. Twenty-nine pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) have extra support and guidance throughout the school day. Almost all pupils transfer to the senior school at the end of Year 6.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is good. The school successfully fulfils its' aim to extend the pupils' academic horizons in all areas of school life. Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well through a broad curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. In the EYFS the pupils achieve highly in all areas of learning and develop their attitudes for learning extremely well. Pupils are articulate, well organised and work well together and individually. The broad, balanced and adaptable curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and is highly effective at meeting the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. Good teaching strongly promotes pupils' progress and achievement, although the breadth of teaching strategies and opportunities for development of thinking and reasoning skills are not always used consistently. The next steps for pupils' learning are very well supported by an excellent assessment and tracking process which has addressed the recommendation made at the time of the last inspection.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is effectively supported by a well thought out, flexible approach to pastoral care within the school. Staff are kept extremely well informed about individual needs and the high level of care given enables pupils to feel that their views are listened to and that they feel safe and secure. Safeguarding issues, including safe recruitment are a priority and the quality of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. The designated officers for child protection and the named governor all receive appropriate training. The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and archived. The school achieves its aim of equipping the pupils with the personal and social skills that will help them work and relax and to develop a spirit of service extremely well.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. Since the previous inspection a structure of distributed leadership has been put in place which has significantly enhanced the process of monitoring for all abilities. All staff are involved in development planning, ensuring that from the EYFS onwards strengths can be built upon and areas for improvement identified. The leadership is reflective and provides strong focussed educational direction for the school. The governors have a clear vision for the future and understand their roles and responsibilities extremely well. They have a strong presence in the school, are well known by the staff and contribute to monitoring through the observation of lessons. They attend school events and the broad range of committees on a termly basis. Links with parents are excellent. This is achieved through a high degree of parental involvement in the school and an outstanding quality and range of information that is shared.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop use of the excellent ICT and library facilities to enhance and extend independent learning across the curriculum.
2. Improve provision for the development of pupils' reasoning and thinking skills

### **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 good.
- 3.2 The school successfully meets its aim of extending its pupils' academic horizons. The broad curriculum, excellent range of extra-curricular activities, exemplary behaviour of the pupils and their desire to achieve well, all contribute towards their learning. The extremely good relationships pupils enjoy amongst themselves and with staff enhance the community spirit which is notable throughout the school.
- 3.3 Children in EYFS achieve excellent levels of achievement by the end of reception. They are active learners, engaged and focused, in both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. High standards were seen in all subjects, particularly in numeracy and literacy. The children show a high level of understanding of vocabulary such as 'rhyme', 'alliteration' and 'dehydration'. They can recognise numbers and in some cases were able to add and subtract two numbers up to 20. Children's independence is effectively developed by the opportunities for them to choose freely from activities both inside and in the outdoor learning areas.
- 3.4 Pupils in Years 1 to 6 show good levels of knowledge and understanding and demonstrate well-developed skills. In line with the school's aims the pupils are well-motivated, and work productively with their peers. They are articulate and express themselves confidently in oral and written work. Pupils show a good grasp of mathematical concepts which they apply across the curriculum. In some cases pupils successfully apply logical and independent thought, such as when starting to programme toys in an information and communication technology lesson (ICT) lesson. However opportunities for using their initiative and reasoning skills are not always promoted or developed as effectively. Exceptional displays of work in classrooms and around the whole-school site celebrate the high levels of creativity achieved. Facilities for ICT and independent research in the library are excellent; however their use across the wider curriculum is limited during curriculum time.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve good standards in many areas and excellent levels in areas such as music and extra-curricular activities. Achievement in music is a strength of the school, with most pupils involved in making music individually and in groups across a wide range of styles. One of the choirs was recently honoured to be asked to take part in the Britten anniversary festival at Snape Maltings. Pupils have achieved high levels of success in graded music examinations and in competitive sport, participating in county and national competitions, most recently for swimming and tennis. Pupils with SEND achieve equally well due to a high level of flexible support and a strong inclusive approach across the school.
- 3.6 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence through observation of lessons, scrutiny of work, interviews with pupils and the level of awards given to pupils entering the senior school confirms the judgement that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND and EAL make very good progress as seen in their improved reading and spelling skills due to the considered, flexible way they are supported. For pupils with EAL the support is often given before a lesson to ensure they cope well in class. More able pupils or those

with particular skills make good progress through the addition of 'challenge' programmes put in place to extend their learning.

- 3.7 The pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. They engage fully in their lessons and are highly supportive of their peers. They are confident and capable learners who enjoy taking on new challenges and exploring new information. They are articulate and express themselves well when given the opportunity to make connections to move their understanding forward.

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

- 3.8 The quality of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 Across all age groups, including the EYFS, pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum and programme of extra-curricular activities which support the school's aims to extend its pupils' academic horizons and to encourage them to work in a spirit of service. A notable strength of the curriculum is the flexibility with which it adapts to the particular needs and talents of its pupils and staff. The broader curriculum responds very well to their needs and interests and plays an integral role in the pupils' academic, creative and sporting progress as well as their excellent personal development.
- 3.10 The curriculum covers a comprehensive range of subjects inclusive of all the requisite areas of learning. Pupils benefit from particularly strong provision in English, mathematics and science. In these subjects a high degree of adaptability allows additional support to be provided outside of the normal curriculum to extend the more able and support the less able. The school provides exceptional provision for music throughout all age ranges with numerous opportunities for pupils to perform and sing in choirs and ensembles and almost every child learns at least one instrument.
- 3.11 The programme of planning and monitoring of pupils is very strong. Gifted and talented pupils are monitored closely and offered a range of additional sessions both individually and in small groups. This programme is further strengthened by the school's willingness to welcome other motivated pupils to join in these sessions and as such an 'opportunity for all' ethos is clearly evident throughout the school.
- 3.12 In the EYFS an excellent range of activities provides all children with the opportunity to settle quickly and become enthusiastic learners who are confident in their achievements. The teachers and assistants, in close co-operation with parents and carers, create a secure, supportive environment in which children develop successfully across all areas of learning.
- 3.13 The staff contribute generously to a remarkable range of extra-curricular activities and this was very positively endorsed by both pupils and parents in their responses to their respective pre-inspection questionnaires. This excellent programme provides the flexibility to respond to the children's own suggestions but also to provide activities that are seldom available to children of this age. As a result pupils are confident to contribute and involve themselves fully in all that the school has to offer.
- 3.14 The school actively encourages pupils to participate in supporting national and community events, such as a recent visit by an African choir, with a particular emphasis on pupils developing empathy with those they are supporting. These excellent opportunities serve to broaden the pupils' perspectives.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 In the EYFS the excellent teaching is characterised by enthusiasm and careful planning which supports the children's learning and achievement extremely well. The children's confidence is built effectively through the range and quality of opportunities on offer to them. Teachers have high expectations of what their children can achieve and careful tracking of their progress ensures that progress is rapid across all ability groups.
- 3.17 From Years 1 to 6 good teaching, high expectations and careful planning underpin the pupils' progress across all ability ranges. This quality of teaching and planning represents an improvement in the consistency and provision for all pupils since the previous inspection.
- 3.18 The teaching sets high standards for the pupils and time in lessons is generally used efficiently and to good effect. The teachers make good use of their subject knowledge and of the resources available to them. In particular the interactive whiteboards in each classroom are used productively in science, art and design technology. For example, in one science lesson, pupils used microscopes independently and effectively to draw on their excellent knowledge of arthropods. During the inspection, fewer lessons were observed where pupils made use of the ICT or library facilities, either for enjoyment or to extend their own independent learning skills.
- 3.19 The school provides an excellent programme for supporting SEND pupils and those with EAL needs. Rigorous monitoring and assessment of these pupils provides excellent information with which teachers are able to plan effectively. All pupils with SEND are assessed regularly and this information feeds into well written individual education plans (IEPs). In the best teaching, individual support staff were used very successfully to work with pupils of differing abilities. In a similar way, pupils with EAL needs were equally well monitored and supported in their learning, often by preparing their language needs before specific lessons. Throughout the school the level of communication, with reference to all pupils with individual needs, is excellent and supports effective teaching.
- 3.20 Marking of pupils' work is undertaken regularly and a clearly defined marking policy is available to all staff. In the best examples seen, teachers gave clear and positive feedback on areas of strength but also insightful comments on how a pupil might improve their work or extend their understanding further. However, in a proportion of examples, comments were brief and without such suggestions for improvement.
- 3.21 In the best lessons, teaching places strong emphasis on developing the pupils' problem solving skills through open-ended tasks, rather than a more directed approach. This was observed during a geography lesson where pupils were encouraged to consider and discuss, independently and in small groups, the adaptability of plants in different mountainous regions and then linked this with human adaptability. This same excellent approach was not a consistent feature of other lessons observed and in a significant number of lessons there tended to be an over-reliance on directed learning which limited opportunities for the development of independent thinking skills.
- 3.22 Teachers work hard to create a stimulating learning environment in which pupils strive to do their best and display the confidence to engage in new opportunities.

The notable quality of displays throughout the entire school sets a particularly high standard. This provides a good model for the pupils' own work which is very good.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The behaviour of the children in the EYFS is exemplary, they know the routines and respond well to their peers and to adults, and play creatively on their own or together. They share well as was seen when a nursery child had left the construction equipment in order to complete a teacher-directed piece of work and was able to let another child play with their model. The skills and attitudes they are developing towards each other prepare them effectively for the next stage of their education.
- 4.3 Across the age-range, the school fulfils its aim of equipping the pupils with the personal and social skills that will help them to work and relax with others in a spirit of service outstandingly well. The responses to the parent and pupil questionnaires clearly highlighted the caring, considerate and supportive nature of the school. The pupils' self-confidence and sense of spirituality is extremely good and this is enhanced by the celebration of creativity so evident throughout the school environment. They show an excellent awareness of the non-material aspects of life, developed through regular opportunities to worship together, through the regular celebration of their many and varied achievements and the inclusive approach to the curriculum.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. At all times they are courteous and polite and understand the difference between right and wrong from the earliest stages in the EYFS. Through a well-planned PSHE programme they consider the importance of good relationships, the need to support each other and the impact of bullying in a community. Pupils are extremely well supported in this by staff who respond to their needs in a highly practical way. Older pupils reflect upon personal and topical issues and develop a strong understanding of what life is like for those less fortunate than themselves. Through their support of local and international charities they develop a deep empathy for the world beyond their school.
- 4.5 The pupils' social awareness is outstanding. Pupils have a full and open view of the political and social issues facing the country. During discussions they were able to talk openly about the recent local elections and display a thorough knowledge of the working of parliament and of royalty. They are encouraged to understand that there will be different viewpoints to take into consideration in any national debate. Pupils accept responsibility with enthusiasm and enjoy helping to run the library, act as 'buddies' for the younger children, represent their peers on school council and ultimately take an important role in the house system. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They value friendship highly and are very positive about the many things the school does to support and nurture this aspect of school life.
- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. Their awareness and respect for other cultures is extremely strong as was seen in their support for the African choir which had recently visited the school. Their knowledge of other faiths is strongly supported through a well thought-out programme of visits and presentations by parents with different religious beliefs. Pupils' extensive knowledge of western culture is developed through inspirational curriculum provision for music and art and the breadth of the extra-curricular opportunities for pupils from Reception to Year 6.

This effectively fulfils the school's aim to develop an interest in cultural and artistic expression.

- 4.7 By the time pupils leave the school they have developed an excellent standard of personal development and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.8 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.9 The school successfully meets its aims of providing a secure and caring environment where each pupil is valued and nurtured to become balanced, confident, considerate and fulfilled people. This is achieved in a relaxed atmosphere and in a school community where relationships are warm and friendly. A wide range of structures are in place to support the children's developing relationships. The buddy system, the Friendship House facility and the Friendship Club combine to successfully enhance relationships, resolve minor problems and create a community spirit where even the youngest children in EYFS feel safe, secure and can develop their social skills well. This is promoted further in the Nursery by the addition of the key person system which provides continuity of approach for the children.
- 4.10 The school's policies and procedures are highly effective in promoting excellent behaviour. Effective anti-bullying strategies are successfully implemented and understood by the pupils. A small number of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that staff were not always fair with rewards and sanctions; however, in discussion with pupils, inspectors found no evidence to support this. Pupils feel strongly that staff deal with misdemeanours quickly and efficiently and are willing to provide highly flexible support to assist with any issues they may face. Pupils' views are actively sought through the school council, which has representatives from Years 2 to 6. The Year 6 members then report to the senior leadership and catering committee ensuring that they feel they have a voice that is genuinely heard and acted upon.
- 4.11 From the EYFS onwards, all pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating and exercise and they are happy to discuss over lunch the nutritional value of the food in relation to providing them with energy for their afternoon games and activities. Pupils benefit from regular exercise through physical education and the many sporting opportunities on offer to them through the curriculum and the comprehensive range of clubs.
- 4.12 The pastoral care of pupils with SEND is excellent and carried out through detailed IEPs which are developed with parental involvement. This is strengthened by a comprehensive plan to improve educational access for all pupils with particular needs.

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

- 4.13 The quality of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.14 From the EYFS onwards thorough measures for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are in place. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive, accurately reflects current practice and is reviewed annually. All staff sign to confirm that they have read the policy and all receive regular child protection training. The designated child protection governor and two child protection officers ensure that all staff are aware of

the necessary procedures to follow in case of concern and all staff involved in the appointment of staff have completed safer recruitment training.

- 4.15 All the necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards have been taken and twice-termly fire practices are held. Comprehensive logs are maintained for all fire equipment and staff receive fire training every three years.
- 4.16 Health and safety policies, including those for pupils with SEND are excellent and procedures are clear and well integrated into the practices of the school. The health and safety committee meet regularly to ensure that risk assessments for facilities, trips and activities are completed and updated. Hazards are monitored daily by staff and caretakers and issues resolved rapidly.
- 4.17 Arrangements for supporting pupils who become ill or injured are comprehensive and thorough. In serious cases a fully equipped medical centre with trained matron is available and for less serious incidents suitable arrangements are made in each section of the school including the EYFS. Most staff are trained in first-aid with an appropriate number trained in specific paediatric first-aid for the EYFS and younger pupils. Staff are well informed about pupils' specific medical needs and detailed records kept. Medicines are appropriately stored in a lockable facility and first aid boxes are regularly checked.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for three years.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance across the school, including the EYFS, is excellent ensuring that the aims and ethos of the school are fully met. Incisive strategic planning and prudent financial management have provided an excellent level of investment in accommodation, high quality staff and resources. The ethos of providing continuous improvement across the school is strongly supported by the governing body and the energy and enthusiasm of its members. As a result, all recommendations from the previous inspection have been met.
- 5.3 The board of governors provides the school with a broad range of expertise and skill and a strong programme of specific training each term strengthens their awareness and understanding of the roles and responsibilities involved. The governors have a very clear vision for the school and offer strong support and challenge to the school's leadership and staff. Their understanding of the day-to-day running of the school is enhanced through regular attendance at school functions, through observations of lessons and regular meetings of the broad range of sub-committees, which support the work of the full board. The governors are kept fully briefed about the workings of the school through regular reports from the head, senior management team and presentations by subject staff.
- 5.4 Safeguarding and welfare, health and safety regulations are addressed at every full board meeting to ensure that all legal responsibilities are met. The whole board reviews the safeguarding policy annually and any weaknesses are addressed. Minutes of meetings indicate that governors have a strong awareness of educational standards within the school and the effective culture for pastoral care within the school community.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 This quality applies across the age range including the EYFS. It successfully meets all of the school's aims. The school has developed and maintains excellent links with parents, carers and guardians.
- 5.7 The school's leadership team provides highly focused educational direction, and this, combined with effective self-evaluation and subsequent action, contributes in strong measure to the pupils' academic progress and personal development. In the EYFS there is excellent commitment to reflection and the process of continuous improvement and, since the previous inspection, staff qualifications have been adjusted and opportunities for peer observation introduced. The structure of the leadership and management over the whole school has been strengthened since the previous inspection to ensure a higher degree of distributed leadership across the staffing compliment. A senior leadership team, made up of the Key Stage leaders in the school, now effectively supports the senior management team. Subject leader responsibilities have also been clarified and their role in monitoring increased. This new structure has successfully addressed the elements of inconsistency within

leadership that were commented upon at the time of the previous inspection. It has also enabled a full review of assessment processes across the school, which has considerably enhanced provision for the full range of pupil ability, including those with SEND and EAL. Policies and procedures are clear, detailed and well implemented, contributing successfully to the smooth running of the school.

- 5.8 The school's leadership, with the close involvement of all the staff, has developed an exemplary school development plan for all sections of the school. The document provides detailed guidance including clear timescales and responsibilities for the successful achievement of each aim. The school has identified the need to continue to develop the concept of 'a community of leaders' throughout the school and further extend the tracking system for attainment and effort, in partnership with the senior school.
- 5.9 A well-structured system for the appraisal of staff ensures that lessons are regularly observed and that the professional dialogue that follows provides opportunities for the discussion of target-setting and future training needs. The process of peer observation and support is now embedded and the role of subject leaders in this process provides staff with an effective system of mentoring to improve standards in all subject areas. Subject leaders have a clear oversight of their subjects and the link between EYFS and Years 1 to 6 is very strong, as is the link with the senior school. An extensive programme of regular meetings ensures that all staff are fully informed about every aspect of school life. In particular, care is taken to ensure that pupils' needs are fully understood and appropriate action taken to meet those needs. Communication amongst staff in all areas of the school is strong.
- 5.10 The management team has consistently recruited and retained high quality staff who display considerable passion for their roles. They have a strong capacity to personalise learning opportunities for all pupils. Arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors are robust and thorough and the centralised register of appointments is well maintained. The leadership makes rigorous arrangements for safeguarding and welfare, health and safety and all staff receive regular training in these areas, as well as undertaking training in a comprehensive range of courses to support their own professional development.
- 5.11 The relationship between the school and parents is excellent and strongly supports pupils' achievements and their personal development. The views of parents are regularly sought and feedback is invited on a range of issues which then informs discussion at management and governor level. Views and suggestions from both parents and pupils are genuinely considered and appropriate action taken. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a very high level of satisfaction with most aspects of school life. They were particularly supportive of the way that the school is led and managed, the extent to which they are encouraged to be involved in the work of the school, the level of care given to their children and the range of experiences offered. The school has a clear and concise complaints policy and parents' concerns are heard promptly and treated with care and consideration. A small number of parents expressed concern about the way that the school dealt with cases of bullying. Through interviews with pupils and a scrutiny of the procedures in place the inspection team were confident that incidents of this kind were rare and when there were difficulties the pupils were very well supported.
- 5.12 Strong links are established with parents from the start in the EYFS. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning experience through 'Pop-In' sessions throughout the school, where parents join in with the activities on

offer, regular contact with the staff and sharing of events experienced by their children out of school. Parents are extremely supportive of the work of the school. They offer assistance through sharing their own expertise through talks and demonstrations, attending matches and concerts, helping on educational visits and supporting charitable events and community projects throughout the year. The active parents' association, The Friends of Ipswich, organises both social and fund raising events, fostering a strong sense of community within the school.

- 5.13 A comprehensive exchange of information ensures that parents are kept fully informed of recent news and matters of interest through a clear and detailed website, weekly newsletters, the parent handbook and entry packs, and email contact. A high level of information about pupils' achievement and effort, including a summary of targets for the future, is provided through regular information evenings, parent forums and formal parents' evenings, along with written reports which increase in regularity as the pupils move through the school.

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