



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

PENNTHORPE SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Pennthorpe School
DfE Number	938/6026
EYFS Number	EY302459
Registered Charity Number	307043
Address	Pennthorpe School Church Street Rudgwick Horsham West Sussex RH12 3HJ
Telephone Number	01403 822391
Fax Number	01403 822438
Email Address	enquiries@pennthorpe.com
Headmaster	Mr Matthew King
Chair of Governors	Mr Toby Mullins
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	360
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (236 boys; 123 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 5 5-11: 216 3-5 (EYFS): 81 11-18: 57
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 359
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sarah Bradley
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	15 May 2012 to 18 May 2012

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 March 2009.

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 through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and/or disabilities).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 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.

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 Gail Purt

Mrs Julie Bolger

Mr Adrian Lowe-Wheeler

Mr David Price

Mrs Jenny Clayphan

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector, Head of Pre-Prep IAPS

Team Inspector, Deputy Head IAPS

Team Inspector, Head IAPS

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(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
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	14
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	15

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Pennthorpe School is a co-educational preparatory day school for boys and girls aged from two to thirteen years. Originally founded in 1930 in Kent, as a boys' Christian boarding school, the school moved to its current location in the village of Rudgwick in West Sussex in 1948. The school is set in fourteen acres of grounds and occupies a large manor house with additional educational buildings and facilities. It operates as a charitable educational trust administered by a board of fourteen governors. The pre-prep, for pupils up to Year 2, occupies its own accommodation, on the main site with access to all school facilities. Children aged from two to three years are accommodated in an adjacent building. The prep school is divided into two departments; the middle school caters for pupils from Years 3 to 5 and the senior school for pupils from Years 6 to 8. The school endeavours to nurture creativity and innovation and help all pupils to develop their talents in a friendly, Christian community, in which citizenship, kindness and unselfishness are valued. It seeks to put the 'fun into the fundamentals', by providing a positive educational environment in which pupils' develop an enthusiasm for learning and where strong relationships with parents and the local community are fostered.
- 1.2 Currently, 236 boys and 123 girls attend the school. A total of 73 children, (53 boys and 20 girls), are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom five (two boys and three girls) are under the age of three. Boys and girls up to the age of four attend on a part-time basis. Twenty-four boys and seven girls attend full-time in Reception. There are 67 pupils accommodated in Years 1 and 2, 154 pupils in Years 3 to 6 and 65 in Years 7 and 8.
- 1.3 The analysis of standardised test scores shows that the ability profile of the school is above the national average. Seventy-three pupils have been identified as having mild learning difficulties of whom sixty receive specialist support. Currently, five pupils do not have English as their principal language although none require additional support with their English. Pupils are predominantly of white British heritage and come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. Most pupils live within a twelve-mile radius of the school. Most pupils move to senior independent schools at the age of thirteen.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, new facilities have been provided for the provision of art, design and technology with extended facilities for information and communication technology (ICT). The purpose built pre-prep has a dedicated outdoor space for each classroom and access to a woodland area. The headmaster took up his appointment in September 2011.

- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) 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 equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Kindergarten Honey Pot	Nursery 2 to 3 years
Kindergarten Beehive	Nursery 3 to 4 years
Reception M	Reception 4 to 5 years
Reception T	Reception 4 to 5 years

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 In this happy, harmonious and supportive school, pupils learn effectively and attain good and often high standards. Children in the EYFS receive a firm grounding for future learning. Good quality teaching engages the interest of competent, active, learners and encourages pupils to think creatively and apply their skills effectively. On occasion, inconsistency in marking and assessment, and lack of variety of teaching styles hinders pupils' overall progress. Pupils experience a broad stimulating curriculum enriched by an excellent, challenging activity programme. This provides opportunities for all pupils, including those who require extra support with their learning and also the most able, to achieve considerable success in a wide range of activities.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. This is a result of the high quality of pastoral care, which has a major impact upon pupils' confidence, high self-esteem, love of their school and eagerness to contribute. At the same time, the strong sense of family and community, supportive relationships and mutual respect, ensures all pupils are valued and given the chance to succeed. In the EYFS children are happy and settled within the school. They show confidence and are polite and well-mannered to visitors. At all ages, pupils have opportunities to show initiative and contribute to their community.
- 2.3 Effective leadership and management together with the support received from governors makes a strong contribution to the direction and quality of education and care of the pupils and to the fulfilment of the school's aims. This is reflected in the the school's ethos and sense of purpose, which values all pupils' achievements whether academic, creative or sporting. Many of the strengths noted at the previous inspection have been maintained. However, the monitoring of health and safety has been less assured. The EYFS is equally well managed, ensuring the very youngest children are provided with the highest quality of care and consistency of approach in readiness for their next stage of learning. Perceptive self-evaluation is central to the school's improvement. In response to the recommendation of the last inspection, the school has set out in a written plan the key objectives for its short-term development. The plan does not yet encompass financial or longer-term development. Excellent relationships exist with parents. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are highly favourable about most aspects of school life. Good progress overall has been made in response to the recommendations of the last inspection. In particular, policies are now reviewed annually and a three year plan has been written which complies with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). Dining arrangements and resources for the junior library have been improved. The regulatory shortcomings identified at that time have been rectified in most respects. However, risk assessments are not consistently and rigorously applied throughout the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure regard is paid to DfE guidance by determining that all risk assessments are consistently and rigorously adhered to in all parts of the school [Part 3, paragraph 11, under Welfare, health and safety].
- 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 point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve systems, at all levels, for monitoring, reporting and recording health and safety requirements and ensure these are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
 2. Use information from academic assessment to inform teaching strategies further in order to meet the needs of all pupils more effectively.
 3. Within the EYFS setting ensure that reports provide greater clarity in reporting the Early Learning Goals and assessment criteria.
 4. Identify clearly the next step targets for each child in the EYFS in each area of learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aim of encouraging pupils to achieve their potential by developing their all round talents. Across the curriculum and in all age groups, pupils achieve well with individual examples of excellence. Pupils gain good knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects. From an early age, pupils read with growing competence. Pupils express themselves fluently both in their speaking and in their written work. In some year groups the standard of English is particularly high, and pupils show a well-developed understanding of the technical aspects and the context of topics when they examine and appraise poetry. At all levels, pupils achieve good standards in their numeracy skills. Older pupils demonstrate high levels of logical and independent thought when they use a range of strategies to investigate and solve problems. Pupils' skills in ICT are applied effectively to a range of subjects and for individual research. Throughout the school high standards are achieved in the creative and performing arts. Aspirational examples of art for all pupils are displayed around the school.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve high levels of success in a range of sports at district, regional and county level. These include team success in cricket, netball, rugby, football and rounders and individual success in javelin, squash and athletics. Many pupils achieve well in external examinations in music, and speech and drama, and also perform in local theatres. Exceptional standards are achieved in art and design with pupils winning awards in nationally recognised competitions. The school's design and technology GreenPower racing team has won individual trophies. Pupils are successful in entry examinations to senior schools and, in addition to academic and all rounder scholarships, pupils gain awards in art, music, drama, dance and sport.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. These good levels of achievement are reflected in the results of standardised tests. Inspection judgements, including observed performance in books, lessons and curriculum interviews, confirm this evaluation of the pupils' attainment. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils sustain a good rate of progress in relation to those of similar ability. On occasions when assessment is not sufficiently targeted to ensure tasks are matched carefully to the specific needs of pupils, progress slows. As a result of good specialist provision, pupils who require learning support make good progress and achieve successful standards, as indicated by standardised tests, regular assessment, and reading records. This is reflected in their work over time, which shows progressively fluent writing with improved grammar, punctuation and expression. The ablest pupils make good progress as indicated by their achievements in academic scholarships and awards in other areas of the curriculum.
- 3.5 The pupils' success is enhanced by their excellent attitudes to learning, their co-operative behaviour and their willingness to work hard. Pupils are keen to succeed and be actively involved in lessons. The mutual respect and excellent relationships among themselves and with the teachers and other staff give pupils every opportunity to learn and achieve successfully.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The curriculum is well planned and covers each area of learning and all aspects of pupils' development. The school is highly successful in meeting its aim to provide a broad and creative curriculum that enables pupils to develop as active and competent learners.
- 3.8 The curriculum is suitable for all ages and abilities and the needs of pupils are well met. Children in the EYFS are provided with a stimulating programme of learning, which contributes successfully to all areas of their development. Since the last inspection, aspects of the curriculum have been given greater clarity and emphasis. This has included the development of an outdoor and woodland learning environment and the introduction of a wide-ranging hobbies programme for senior pupils. The development of a dedicated library facility and the introduction of a phonically-based reading and writing scheme in the pre-prep, are progressively benefiting the pupils' literacy skills. In the prep school, time allocations for individual subjects have been increased and the curriculum is timetabled more effectively. Languages are well represented. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) successfully promotes pupils' social confidence through a range of topics including citizenship. Music and drama are strong elements and the pupils' creative skills are particularly well supported by the excellent new art, design and technology facility. Resources for ICT enhance the pupils learning effectively across many subject areas. The development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) to support the curriculum has been innovative and of motivation to pupils both in and out of school, where they are able to access a wealth of resources for homework, independent research or the development of an interest. The school provides effectively for a wide range of sports and makes valuable use of its extensive grounds.
- 3.9 Effective individual support is provided, both in and out of the classroom, for pupils who require additional help with their learning. In some subjects pupils are organised into ability groups. This enables work to be planned appropriately for a range of abilities. Specific provision for the most able pupils includes weekly extension lessons in English, mathematics and science. In addition, they have the opportunity to participate in a half-termly Saturday morning enrichment programme. As pupils progress through the school, increased specialist teaching in a range of subjects enables them to achieve good and often high standards.
- 3.10 The excellent extra-curricular programme meets the school's aim to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils of all ages. A varied and all-embracing programme of activities includes gardening, rock climbing and kit car building. Musical and sporting opportunities are extensive. From Year 3 annual residential and camping visits challenge pupils and provide them with additional experiences to promote team building. A wide range of visits to places of interest is organised for each year group to enrich pupils' cultural education. Younger pupils dressed in costume to visit a local historical house to experience life as Victorian domestic servants. Visitors to the school are used to enhance the curriculum. Recent visitors have included an expert on Ancient Greece, an Olympic rower and a brass band. Pupils benefit from links with the local community including a visit to a local Japanese school where they learnt about a culture different to their own.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.12 Teaching makes a good contribution to the achievement of pupils in all year groups including those in the EYFS. It supports the aims of the school to develop sound work habits and attitudes to learning, helping pupils to realise their full potential. Teaching is generally well planned and engages pupils' interest. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect. Teachers' good knowledge of their pupils enables them to monitor progress effectively. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, the standard of marking varies. The most constructive provides a balance between recognition of strengths and clear, evaluative comments with targets to identify how work can be improved. Occasionally, marking is cursory and does not identify areas for development. Standardised test information is used effectively to provide an understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. A range of assessment procedures, including those based on a 'traffic light system', are constructive and helpful. However, they are not always used effectively to guide planning and ensure that teaching consistently raises expectations and meets individual needs.
- 3.13 In the most effective teaching, teachers use their good subject knowledge, to engage pupils and stretch the most able with extended tasks and their skilful questioning promotes lively discussions to enhance learning. In addition, well-planned tasks are used to provide a good challenge for groups of different ability and involve pupils in evaluating each other's work. For example, in mathematics pupils constructively and maturely discussed one another's work on hexagon problems, enabling rapid progress. Throughout the school, learning objectives are nearly always made explicit and shared with pupils and time is mostly well managed. In many cases, an appropriate range of teaching methods enables pupils of all abilities, including the more able, to make good progress through interesting and challenging activities, using resources to good effect. In a few lessons, the pace of learning slows when teacher exposition is overlong and less time is spent on tasks that challenge and encourage self-initiative and independent learning. Individual outstanding projects reflect the pupils' creativity and demonstrate a wide range of research and presentational skills.
- 3.14 Teachers know pupils well and relationships are excellent. Their good knowledge of pupils' capabilities allows staff to provide suitable tasks that motivate the pupils. Consequently, behaviour is nearly always good, with pupils displaying co-operative attitudes. Specialist staff who support children with special educational needs provide good guidance for class teachers. Pupils with identified learning needs receive effective help in class, so that they make the same appropriate progress as their peers. This aspect is well developed, and systematic checks to alert staff to pupils' possible difficulties have recently been introduced. Individual education plans are provided and regularly reviewed for identified pupils. Pupils recognised as being gifted or talented in particular fields are given good opportunities to develop further through intellectual challenges and creative writing. Teachers ensure that pupils' learning is enhanced with many enrichment opportunities, including a wide range of educational visits and fieldwork.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 This is reflected in the high quality of the relationship between pupils and staff and the excellent pastoral care. In accordance with the school's aims the pupils display a strong sense of citizenship, kindness and unselfishness.
- 4.3 The pupils have a well-developed sense of the spiritual that reflects the school's strong Christian ethos. Pupils are confident and friendly, express themselves and their feelings clearly and have high self-esteem which is encouraged through the effective system of rewards, praise and celebration of success. Pupils appreciate the non-material aspects of life, embracing the outdoors as a rich learning environment with pupils enthusiastically participating in the inspiring gardening club and the woodland activities. The pupils have many opportunities to participate in musical and dramatic productions and this enhances their imagination, inspiration and insight. Religious studies (RS) lessons and chapel services encourage reflection, in addition to developing personal and spiritual awareness, exploring feelings and emotions and developing values and principles to embrace life. Pupils are exceptionally courteous, caring and considerate towards others.
- 4.4 The school is highly successful in instilling a strong moral code through its ethos, and the example set by staff. As a result, pupils are able to justify their opinions, actions and decisions when arguing a point during school council meetings and clearly identifying their reasons. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what is right or wrong and are clear on ways in which to resolve disputes. They feel confident to talk to staff for advice, and understand and readily accept the need for rules and boundaries. The school is effective in promoting good and frequently exemplary behaviour. Pupils display fairness and respect for others and are proud to receive citizenship awards for their personal contribution in these respects.
- 4.5 The school develops a happy, caring atmosphere from an early age. The pupils play and work together harmoniously, helping others when needed. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and pupils are confident and articulate when speaking to adults. All are proud of their school and feel valued and appreciated. Children of all ages respond well to responsibilities as house captains and leaders, head and deputy head boy and girl and as representatives on school council and the charity committee. These responsibilities ensure that the pupils feel valued. Charitable activities support local, national and international charities and pupils in Year 7 and 8 arrange events such as film nights to raise funds. Pupils' understanding of the PSHE curriculum is deepened when they attend a local primary school junior citizen day. Pupils look forward to the numerous visits that enhance the curriculum. Residential visits provide challenges that develop independence and heighten a sense of community spirit.
- 4.6 Pupils show a good level of cultural awareness. They learn to respect the opinions of others and a sense of tolerance and harmony pervades the school community. Pupils accept and celebrate alternative faiths and cultures and their growing knowledge is fostered through subjects such as RS, geography and art. The pupils' excellent personal development means that by the time they leave the school they exhibit confidence and have clear understanding of the needs of others.

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

- 4.7 The pastoral care throughout the school is excellent.
- 4.8 Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils are positive and demonstrate high levels of trust. Pupils are enthusiastic in their learning and take advantage of the opportunities provided by the school. The form or class teacher is responsible for providing pastoral care in the first instance. Older pupils also attend a weekly tutorial that provides additional support and guidance to ensure their welfare. Pastoral records are highly effective and ensure pupils are monitored and supported to meet personal needs. Communication between all staff regarding pupils is regular and focused. The pastoral steering group ensures that systems are reviewed regularly to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils comment that they are extremely happy at school and feel safe and secure.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to enjoy a healthy diet through snack times and lunch. They enjoy healthy exercise through the physical education programme and have ample opportunity to play energetically within the extensive grounds. The school is effective in promoting good behaviour. It has rigorous procedures to prevent harassment and bullying, and deals constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are confident that issues are dealt with swiftly and successfully. Sanctions and rewards are pertinent to the ages and needs of pupils and judged by pupils to be fair. Good behaviour is visibly promoted round the school. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school council and community challenge groups allow pupils to express opinions and to suggest and investigate projects for the benefit of the whole school community. The great majority of pupils state that they feel valued, cared for and embrace their life at school.

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

- 4.10 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound.
- 4.11 The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy and procedures. Effective steps have been taken to ensure its implementation in matters of review and the procedure for appointments of staff and others to the school. Training in child protection is up-to-date for everyone including the designated persons. The necessary recruitment checks have been completed and recorded on a single central register as required.
- 4.12 Measures to reduce risks from fire and other hazards are good and ongoing with appropriate risk assessments undertaken by an outside consultancy. Fire evacuation procedures are well organised and properly recorded. Regular checks are carried out on fire equipment and electrical appliances. The health and safety committee meets regularly. Since the last inspection a premises manager has been appointed to assist the bursar and once a term a governor conducts a site inspection of the school. Checks are made on the building and grounds for hazards and an effective maintenance system is in place. However, the monitoring, recording and evaluation of health and safety procedures have not been carried out with sufficient rigour. Risk assessments are maintained for most inside and outside areas but vary in quality with respect to their effectiveness and implementation. Suitable risk assessments are carried out for all off-site visits.

- 4.13 The medical room is well equipped, and first-aid training is arranged for all staff at a basic level and at a higher level for staff with specific responsibilities. Any medical incidents are recorded correctly. The admission and attendance registers are completed properly and stored appropriately as required.

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 structure and management arrangements of the governing body provide effective oversight of the school and, by offering strategic guidance, enable the school to achieve its overall aims. Governors' responsibilities are well defined and individual governors are assigned specific areas of responsibility. Their collective professional, financial and educational expertise ensures they effectively monitor the performance of the school, including educational standards. Governors take a close interest in development planning and have been particularly effective in making well-considered provision for the school's accommodation, resources and investment in staff, to meet pupils' educational needs. Financial planning is particularly strong and efficiently managed in conjunction with the bursar. It has enabled the school to establish a secure position from which to plan its future.
- 5.3 Governors have a good insight into the working of the school and understand its needs well. They are well informed by the headmaster, bursar and senior staff. Governors visit the school regularly, talk to staff and visit social and formal functions. As a result, relationships between governors and school are positive, with challenge as well as support provided. They work together well in the interests of the pupils.
- 5.4 In most respects, governors are effective in the discharging of their responsibilities for statutory requirements. They undertake the annual review of safeguarding arrangements throughout the school and one governor has specific responsibility for matters relating to child protection. Governors take very seriously the welfare of the pupils. However, they have not exercised effective oversight of some aspects of health and safety.

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 Leadership and management at all levels are effective and ensure the school fulfils its aims well. The senior management team has established a coherent structure and all members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The transition across each section of the school is well managed. Senior managers are mostly successful in the review and implementation of policy and practice, including those for the safeguarding of pupils, to ensure its effectiveness. Since the last inspection good progress has been made in the areas outlined for development. ICT is used more effectively across the curriculum, dining arrangements have been improved and a dedicated junior library area provides suitable resources for the younger pupils. A three year plan that complies with SENDA has been written with appropriate timescales. The monitoring, recording and implementation of risk assessments has not been rigorous.
- 5.7 A vigorous sense of purpose is quickly being established since the appointment of a new headmaster. At all levels, the school is benefiting from clear educational direction and commitment, resulting in good quality provision of the pupils' education and the excellent standard of their personal development. Senior managers work

constructively together and significant progress has been made since the last inspection in improving the monitoring of the school's life and work. A whole-school plan has been drawn up after consultation with the school community and self-evaluation. The plan is detailed and shows a clear cycle of review. It does not yet identify financial implications or the main priorities in the longer term. Heads of department and subject co-ordinators are becoming progressively more involved in the process of evaluation of their subjects. Subject handbooks and schemes of work are detailed and helpful. The successful management is reflected in the loyal and hardworking staff. They feel their contributions are valued and this helps to develop a sense of purpose and commitment to the school's aims and development.

- 5.8 The school is effective in securing well-qualified staff who fully embrace the aims and objectives of the school. Good staffing levels enable appropriate support to be given to all pupils. A programme of induction, overseen by senior managers, supports staff new to the school and helps them to settle quickly. The school recognises the importance of staff development and an effective appraisal system, which includes lesson observations, is central to this process. Staff are actively encouraged to attend training courses to further their professional development and develop their teaching skills. All staff are properly trained in the procedures for safeguarding and the welfare of pupils ensuring their needs are well met. Some senior members of staff, including the headmaster, have undertaken safer recruitment training.
- 5.9 The school is highly successful in its aim to maintain close and excellent relationships with its parents. Effective systems for communication, including electronic methods, such as the parent portal, provide many opportunities for parents to be aware of, and to participate in, the many activities organised by the school.
- 5.10 Parents demonstrated their high levels of support for the school in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They particularly appreciated the help and information that the school gives them, the richness and variety of cross-curricular activities, the high standards of behaviour which the school promotes and the fact that their children feel happy and secure. The inspectors agree with these positive views. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure and concerns are treated sensitively and dealt with promptly.
- 5.11 The headmaster and staff are readily available for parents who are welcomed into school. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work of their children and the life of the school. They provide valued support on class outings, at sports events and also with activities in school such as the recent woodland clearing scheme undertaken in preparation for lessons in 'living and working in the wild'. An extremely active 'Friends of Pennthorpe' group of parents organise successful social and charitable events such as the recent school ball, the annual autumn fair and many smaller fundraising projects.
- 5.12 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with detailed and relevant information. The school provides written reports every half-term which give parents good information about their children's work, and include grades for attainment and effort. In addition, the school's website is constantly updated to keep parents informed of events and, increasingly, of their children's achievements and progress. Consultation evenings, talks about aspects of the school curriculum and informal discussions with staff provide information about the pupils' wider development.

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) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the setting is good. Experienced staff devise interesting tasks that meet children's individual needs well. This encourages confidence and an enthusiasm to learn so that children make good progress. The warm, caring environment ensures that children have a happy, secure start to their education. Recommendations from the last Ofsted and ISI reports have been implemented and changes since the last Ofsted inspection indicate there is good capacity for improvement.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 Leadership and management are good. The designated governor for the EYFS gives informed and friendly support. A clear desire to move forward is demonstrated by rigorous analysis of children's attainment. Records, strategies and policies support effective management. These are implemented consistently and ensure equality for all children to facilitate full participation. Reports are detailed but do not indicate whether the Early Learning Goals have been achieved, nor do they consistently show clear targets for further improvement. The setting works closely with parents and others. Parents particularly appreciate the happy family atmosphere and the trusting relationships between staff and children. Staff work as a strong unified team. They take every opportunity for further training, and share knowledge or seek outside advice as needed. All staff place a high priority on the careful and effective safeguarding of children. The quality of the learning environment is outstanding and resources are plentiful and of good quality.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Children's learning and development is fostered well through the provision of high quality experiences and extensive support for individual needs. Children under three are helped to develop effectively through a range of activities that encourage exploration and investigation. Teaching for children between the age of three and five is always highly effective with questions used expertly to extend children's thinking and reasoning. Regular and detailed assessment ensures that staff have a thorough knowledge of each child's stage of development. This is used to plan tasks both inside and outside that focus on children's individual needs. The setting provides a stimulating curriculum with a wide range of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Calm routines and an excellent awareness of children's welfare, produce an atmosphere conducive to learning and one in which children are safe and thrive. Risk assessments for outside visits and around the setting are implemented consistently.

6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are good. Children in the EYFS have consistently good levels of achievement in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Children are confident and make significant gains in their knowledge. The youngest children effectively develop their speaking and listening skills as a result of the individual support and interaction provided by the staff. By the end of Reception the majority speak fluently and expressively and listen attentively. They concentrate hard on improving their reading skills, and use their phonic knowledge effectively to write simple words and sentences. Children under three enjoy counting. Reception children understand numbers to twenty, add pence beyond ten, subtract small numbers and recognise simple shapes. Evidence of children's ICT skills is more limited. Their social skills are excellent, all children make happy relationships and their behaviour is exemplary. They understand about being safe, the need for good hygiene and the importance of eating healthily.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.5 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.