



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Highfield Priory School

June 2019



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School's Details

School	Highfield Priory School			
DfE number	888/6009			
Early Years registration number	EY312963			
Registered charity number	532262			
Address	Highfield Priory School Fulwood Row Fulwood Preston Lancashire PR2 5rw			
Telephone number	01772 709624			
Email address	schooloffice@highfieldpriory.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Jeremy Duke			
Chair of governors	Mrs Melissa Conlon			
Age range	0 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	273			
	Boys	125	Girls	148
	EYFS	117	Juniors	156
Inspection dates	25 to 27 June 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Highfield Priory is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 6 months and 11 years. It was founded in 1938 and moved to its current site, on the outskirts of Preston, in 1979. It is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The nursery for children aged from six months to three years is housed in its own building: The Bungalow, which is within the school grounds, and has access to all the school's facilities. The rest of the school, including the pre-prep which comprises the pre-school, reception and years 1 and 2, is accommodated in the main building, which has been remodelled and added to over the years.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection a new chair of governors was appointed in September 2018.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to encourage all pupils to develop their full potential by stimulating their intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm and imagination. It seeks to develop self-confidence and independence so that pupils are well equipped to play an active role in society, respect others and appreciate their own and other cultures.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils predominantly come from professional and business families who live in Preston and the surrounding area. They represent a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures which are typical of the area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average.
- 1.6 The school has identified five pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyscalculia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). Extension work and problem-solving activities are provided for those pupils identified by the school as being the most able, while a range of clubs cater for those with particular talents in sport, art, music or drama.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school measures attainment using national curriculum tests. In the years 2015 to 2017, the results were well above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.20 All children under the age of two including those with particular needs progress rapidly from carefully documented starting points, which are informed by initial meetings with parents and accurate and focused observations by key people. Children develop the confidence and skills to prepare them for their next stage in their education aided by the fact that staff know them very well. All children learn in an extremely caring environment. Systems to identify children with additional needs are effective. As a result of carefully planned activities throughout the setting which reflect their interests, children's individual needs are met extremely well and progress is consistent across all groups.
- 2.21 All children respond positively to the excellent care and learning experiences that the setting provides. They express their needs and feelings confidently and seek out their key person when tired or needing reassurance. The high level of support provided for all children's personal and emotional development enables all children to feel safe, happy and secure.
- 2.22 Protecting and safeguarding children is a high priority and staff recognise the responsibility they have in protecting such young children. All staff have up-to-date safeguarding training and paediatric first aid training.
- 2.23 Leaders and managers ensure that the standard of provision is extremely high, which supports rapid progress. Very effective self-evaluation has been undertaken and the school's action plan highlights realistic targets for continuous improvement.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.24 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.25 The strong direction provided by the leadership team results in an enthusiastic and strong staff team who share an ambitious vision to provide high-quality education and exemplary levels of care within a clear vision for future development. A well-established cycle of supervision meetings for staff ensures that staff are extremely well supported in their roles as key people. Any training needs are identified and met. This has a positive impact on children's learning and development.
- 2.26 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and comments from parent interviews during the inspection were extremely positive. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care their children receive.
- 2.27 Through comprehensive self-evaluation, and plans for future development, leaders and managers ensure the children receive an excellent start to their education, enabled by continuous improvement in learning and care provision. The views of staff and parents are considered when evaluating the effectiveness of this provision. The leadership team are highly effective in overseeing the education plans, staff practices and children's records, ensuring that the curriculum meets the relevant statutory requirements. All children are treated as individuals and are offered a range of exciting and interesting experiences, both in the indoor and outdoor environment. Currently, the outdoor environment does not offer broader experiences and sufficient challenge which limits the development of investigative skills and natural curiosity. A new system of planning, which focuses on the children's interests has been recently introduced and is monitored against age-related expectations, ensuring that all children are well prepared for future learning.

- 2.28 The children's cultural awareness is deepened through the celebration of various cultural and religious festivals from around the world. Equality, diversity and British values are actively promoted through everyday routines. Children have opportunities to make decisions in a variety of contexts, such as choosing a book to share with an adult, requesting a favourite song or rhyme and making choices of fruit at snack time.
- 2.29 Staff show high expectations of children's behaviour. They model and praise excellent behaviour and gently distract them where necessary to improve behaviour. They encourage children to share toys and be kind to one another. In this way even, the youngest children learn to respect each other.
- 2.30 Procedures for safeguarding are fully adhered to across the setting. Staff undertake regular safeguarding training, including training to prevent radicalisation and extremism, and they are highly aware of the actions to be followed if there is cause for concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.31 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 2.32 Staff have consistently high expectations for the children in their care. They have an excellent understanding of how babies and young children learn and develop and support them extremely well. This enables all children to make rapid progress in relation to their ability. The staff know the children very well and engage with them sensitively to promote and extend their learning. Staff model language effectively for babies and toddlers, and use books creatively to increase vocabulary, understanding, and speaking and listening skills.
- 2.33 Staff apply their secure knowledge of age-appropriate goals for individual children extremely well. Assessment information is continually gathered through photograph evidence and written observations of the children and is carefully documented in the child's record of learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning record by the sharing of next steps and providing information about the child's interests at home. Key people make very good use of such assessment to plan effectively the next steps in children's learning. They track individual children's progress against age-related expectations. This alerts staff to any emerging needs or gaps in learning, which are effectively addressed. This ensures readiness for children's next stage in learning.
- 2.34 Interactions between staff and children are timely and purposeful and help to extend children's understanding and development. Adults grasp every opportunity to extend children's language and communication skills, as was seen when babies were handling items from the treasure sack, modelling language and new vocabulary.
- 2.35 Staff praise and encourage children effectively so that they know they are doing well and are confident to engage in their learning. Key workers model good behaviour, kindness and good manners. Staff engage positively with children during routine daily activities, such as at meal times and when attending to personal needs. As a result, children's social and language abilities develop strongly.
- 2.36 Excellent relationships with parents enable information about the children to be exchanged seamlessly at handover times. Information about each child's daily routines and their likes and dislikes is gathered from the parents on entry to the setting. This is used effectively by key people as a starting point to enable children to settle quickly. Daily feedback in communication books provides parents with food and sleep information. Developmental summaries are shared with parents during twice yearly parent evenings.
- 2.37 The setting is well resourced, and the curriculum ensures effective learning so that all children are provided with equal opportunities to develop into enthusiastic, curious and independent learners. Progress checks at age two highlight any potential concerns and well-established links with local agencies ensure that advice can be swiftly obtained.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.38 The personal development behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.39 Leaders and staff support and encourage children to develop their confidence and independence effectively. They create a secure and happy environment which enables children to be highly successful learners. Children are confident to take risks and seek new challenges, for example when babies independently persevere to climb onto a bouncer in the outdoor area, enjoying a sense of achievement when they succeed.
- 2.40 Children have extremely well-developed social skills for their age. They are content to play co-operatively and happily alongside each other. They are beginning to engage in activities together, such as when toddlers crawl into the tunnel, delighted to engage with their peers when meeting in the middle, and when babies share resources when playing in the water tray. They relish opportunities to use their imagination, such as toddlers pretending to use mobile phones to take photographs and saying 'cheese'.
- 2.41 Introductory taster visits help new children settle smoothly into the setting's routines and careful consideration is given to preparing children both socially and emotionally for the move to their next class. Parents are reassured about new routines and experiences for their child during transition, and detailed handovers between staff ensure that essential information is passed on, enabling children to transition smoothly. The strong key person system ensures warm relationships and close bonds with children and their families. Well-established routines enable children to feel safe and secure emotionally and physically. Staff effectively promote prompt and regular attendance and accurate records are kept.
- 2.42 Excellent behaviour is encouraged by vigilant staff. Careful supervision ensures that children treat each other kindly and any incidences of challenging behaviour are quietly addressed, such as reminding children about 'kind hands'.
- 2.43 Nutritious food ensures that children have a balanced and healthy diet. Individual dietary needs are known and carefully catered for. Time is spent outdoors regularly, in the adjacent play area, and on walks through the school grounds, ensuring that children have sufficient fresh air and exercise in a safe environment.
- 2.44 High standards of care and hygiene support the children's personal needs. The children's excellent personal development at this young age ensures that they respect others, which lays the foundations for their contribution to wider society and life in Britain.

Outcomes for children

- 2.45 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 2.46 Children make rapid progress in their personal and emotional development due to the nurturing interactions with staff. The dedicated staff provide stimulating learning opportunities and outstanding care, which results in most children meeting or exceeding the level of development that is typical for their age. Many group situations, such as snack times, meal times and when children participate in stories and songs, promote the development of good relationships, independence and early communication skills.
- 2.47 Children display high levels of engagement. Babies respond to their familiar adults, turning towards them when their names are called. They delight in exploring the textures and taste of fruit and expressing their feelings to adults, developing confidence and exploratory skills. They join in with action rhymes and use props appropriately to support the songs. Toddlers show curiosity when enclosing items in different sized containers, thereby developing early mathematical skills.

- 2.48 All children demonstrate high levels of independence when eating, using cutlery and cups with increasing competence and communicating their needs effectively. Babies make their needs known with gestures and babbling, and toddlers use words and phrases well as they increase their ability to communicate. Children begin to care for one another for example when handing out beakers to their friends.
- 2.49 All children enjoy their learning, and their growing concentration spans demonstrate engagement and perseverance. They persist at activities, developing the key skills needed for their next stage of learning extremely well.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Increase opportunities for exploration, play and learning in the wider outdoor environment.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Babies	Nursery (6 months to 2 years)
Nursery	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Pre-school	Nursery (3 to 4 years)

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards learning and are hardworking and resilient.
 - Pupils have very well-developed communication skills; they are highly articulate and confident speakers, and listen and respond maturely.
 - Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are very well developed, and pupils are competent and confident users of ICT.
 - Older pupils have well-developed higher-order thinking skills, but these are not yet thoroughly embedded in younger pupils.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and take responsibility for their behaviour and actions.
 - Pupils make an excellent contribution to the lives of others within the school, by undertaking roles of responsibility, and to the local community and wider society through their support of charities.
 - Pupils' social development and collaboration skills are excellent and relationships between pupils are warm and positive.
 - Pupils display great self-confidence, self-awareness and resilience; they reflect on their learning and demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to improve further.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school may wish to consider the following improvement:
- Continue to develop pupils' higher-order thinking skills throughout the whole school.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, pupils achieve highly across the wide range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities available to them. In the EYFS, all children aged two and above make very good progress in relation to their age and development. By the end of Reception, the majority have exceeded many of the Early Learning Goals. Older pupils gain places at their first choice of senior school, many of which have challenging entry requirements. In addition, several are awarded scholarships and other awards. Pupils' attainment in public examinations has been consistently high for the last three years, with results at Key Stage 2 being well above the national average for maintained schools. In 2018 this level of attainment was maintained; all pupils obtained the expected level for their ability in their Key Stage 2 examinations with most exceeding the expected standard in mathematics and a large majority exceeding the expected standard in reading. These levels of attainment, together with work scrutiny and lesson observation show that pupils make rapid progress in relation to their ability. Pupils with SEND achieve to the same level as their peers, and often outperform individual expectations. Specialist support if needed, and small class sizes allowing teachers to focus upon individual needs, are major contributors to the excellent academic achievement of all groups. School leaders and governors contribute to this success by creating an ethos which supports and encourages pupils and staff in the pursuit of excellence. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire commented that they are very pleased with the range of subjects provided.

- 3.6 Pupils develop excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Pre-prep pupils showed an excellent understanding of multiplication tables, while older pupils demonstrated a thorough grasp of the concepts of refraction in science, and showed a very good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar when completing written tasks in French. Pupils are aided in their learning by excellent teaching which demonstrates high expectations and good planning, encompassing a variety of techniques tailored to the needs of the pupils. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, most pupils and almost all parents agreed that teachers help them learn and make progress. Throughout the school, pupils display a good understanding of their previous learning and are encouraged to apply this knowledge to new situations and problems. For example, senior pupils applied their previous knowledge of powers and roots in mathematics to grasp the concept of binary numbers quickly and accurately. The youngest children developed their gross motor skills by learning to race over hurdles in a physical education (PE) lesson.
- 3.7 Pupils achieve highly in a wide range of creative and physical pursuits and are supported in their achievements by the comprehensive extra-curricular programme, very good sports and other facilities, and excellent teaching. Most pupils are involved in performing arts at the school, with many learning to play a musical instrument, and attaining good grades in external music examinations for their age. Imaginative and creative art is displayed throughout the school. School teams of all ages are highly successful in a wide range of competitions, and exceptionally talented pupils represent national, regional and county teams in a range of sports, including tennis, hockey, chess, swimming, cricket and netball. During discussions and in questionnaire responses, almost all pupils and parents commented that they are very pleased with the range of activities provided.
- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills are very well developed; they are confident and articulate speakers. They begin to develop this ability in the EYFS where they question confidently and express their ideas and views intelligently. They enjoy conversing with each other and with adults. Pupils make good use of numerous opportunities to practise public speaking including in assemblies, and elocution and drama lessons. For example, following a study of the oratory techniques of Martin Luther King, senior pupils prepared and delivered powerful and persuasive speeches to their peers on topics such as terrorism, plastic pollution and bullying. Pupils listen attentively in class and follow instructions well. They are keen to communicate with their peers and can interpret and solve the problems given to them by their teachers.
- 3.9 Pupils' written work is of a very high quality and they display clearly the ability to write for a range of audiences and in a wide variety of styles. In an English lesson, pupils involved themselves fully in learning how to use persuasive writing techniques such as rhetorical questions and emotive language. They then employed them successfully to write a letter to their member of parliament regarding the threat to a local wood posed by a new road. At all ages, pupils take a pride in their work and present it neatly with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Younger children used the knowledge of phonics well to write words and sentences independently. Older pupils use adjectives and adverbs successfully to improve descriptions and so increase their understanding of how to engage the reader, for example in essays describing the view from a cliff top.
- 3.10 Pupils from the EYFS onwards have strong numeracy skills and enjoy their mathematics lessons. The youngest children can count with confidence beyond 10, and can add and subtract, and recognise written numbers. Children in the EYFS showed an excellent understanding of mathematics when working out capacities, while older pupils showed a thorough grasp of number bonds when adding two or three numbers to obtain any given number. Pupils are able to use their mathematical ability in other subjects such as when estimating and measuring in design technology; using their knowledge of tessellation, symmetry and ratios in art; or constructing graphs in science.

- 3.11 Pupils demonstrate good learning skills. Recent initiatives by senior leaders designed to improve pupils' study skills have begun to bear fruit, especially in the work of older pupils. Senior pupils wrote well-constructed and highly interesting essays about their choice of a mountain environment. Their notes showed meticulous research using a variety of sources, careful planning of the structure of their project and then thorough revision of what they had written in the light of their teacher's feedback. Senior pupils also produce an annual newsletter which involves the pupils selecting a topic, gathering information including interviewing staff and then editing all their material before writing their article. However, opportunities for pupils to develop higher-order thinking skills are more limited lower down the school particularly when work is too closely directed through over-reliance upon worksheets.
- 3.12 From the earliest stages, pupils confidently use ICT across the curriculum to support their learning. Pupils are competent at programming, word processing and coding on desktop computers or tablets. As they move through the school, pupils increasingly use the wide range of ICT resources and other information sources available, such as the library. They develop their ability to analyse the results of their research and synthesise their findings to enhance their understanding. Pre-prep pupils were able to use formulae in a spreadsheet to solve a problem and quickly understood that changing any variable had an impact upon the result. Older pupils showed familiarity and competence with a variety of programmes such as when constructing a presentation to show the relationship between earth and space. Pupils are adept at coding and can write their own simple computer games and can use branching databases to solve problems.
- 3.13 Attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils enjoy learning, not just from their teachers but also from each other. Mutual support between pupils is a strong feature of the school. For example, the youngest pupils demonstrated good teamwork in their PE lesson as they worked together in a relay race, while older pupils evaluated each other's ideas when devising a quiz to confirm their understanding of a science topic. Pupils are keen to learn, and welcome advice from both teachers and their peers. They are resilient and confident in the classroom, approaching every task willingly and with high degrees of motivation. In almost all lessons pupils were keen to participate and extend their knowledge further, helped by lively delivery and fast pace.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence and self-awareness. This is recognised by parents who responded to questionnaires, almost all of whom agree that the school helps the children to be confident and independent. Pupils are curious and willing to learn new skills, and not afraid to take risks; this reflects the school ethos that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Pupils' self-esteem is boosted when they receive house points and merits. Pupils develop resilience as they are guided through increasingly challenging curricular and co-curricular activities. They learn to not stop trying even when their first attempt might not be successful. For instance, younger pupils demonstrated determination in a mathematics lesson when adding up using coins, while older pupils persevered when devising sentences giving the weather forecast in French. In almost all teaching peer assessment is the norm and pupils welcome input from their peers. This was typified in a senior games lesson where pupils gave critiques of each other's batting and offered suggestions for improvement. All pupils have an excellent understanding of how to improve their own learning. They are aided in this by constructive marking which gives targets for pupils' next steps, contributing to their excellent self-awareness. Children in the EYFS are helped to make progress by clear communication between staff and parents; an online program allows parents to see the progress their children are making on a daily basis and targets set, so they can assist with their child's learning at home. Such measures typify the strong governance, leadership and management which ensures the success of the school; most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed with this view.

- 3.16 From the EYFS onwards, pupils make positive decisions daily, such as how to use their free time, how to deal with friendship issues and how to take responsibility for their own actions. As they get older, they take decisions regarding their learning such as choosing their own level of challenge within lessons. Older pupils were seen to make informed and sensible selections from the options available at lunch and so ensured a balance of healthy choices on their plate. By taking on increased responsibility as they get older, pupils develop an awareness of how their decisions affect themselves and those around them. Their ability to organise themselves translates into skills which they use to good effect as they gather the ideas of their peers for school council meetings. Decisions made in these forums have a positive effect on the school, such as the introduction of a fruit bar at lunch. In interview, pupils said that they feel their voice is heard and valued and that they can make change happen. This view is supported by the staff who all stated that the school listens to children and takes any requisite action. Inspection evidence supports these views. Pupils decide which fundraising activities they will adopt in order to raise money for their chosen charities.
- 3.17 Pupils develop good spiritual awareness as they move through the school. All pupils have an appreciation of the non-materialistic aspects of life such as art, music and poetry as well as their place in a multi-cultural and diverse world. They learn that it is possible to view things differently through studies of various genres of art such as the cubism of Paul Klee and the paintings of the New Mexico landscape by Georgia O'Keefe. The termly music assemblies at which individuals and ensembles perform provide pupils with an opportunity to reflect upon the talents of their peers. Pupils of all ages demonstrate a passion for the environment and an appreciation of their own surroundings. An area of woodland known as 'the haven' is a much valued space. Pupils develop a good understanding of the world's major religions which they study as part of their religious education.
- 3.18 All pupils have an excellent moral understanding and accept responsibility for their behaviour. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents who responded believe that the school actively promotes good behaviour, and all pupils said that the school expects good behaviour. Pupils are extremely polite and well-mannered, and are happy to accept the boundaries of acceptable behaviour which have been drawn up with input from the pupils themselves. Children in the EYFS work well collaboratively and, with careful guidance from the practitioners, learn that saying sorry can be a good experience. The 'kindness tree' in the EYFS provides a visual reminder of examples of good behaviour and so encourages others to emulate the good deeds celebrated on the tree. The 'Highfield high five' award for good behaviour is a much sought after award which encourages the highest standards of behaviour and manners. Pupils' strong moral and social attitudes are rooted in the strong family atmosphere that suffuses all age ranges and supports a major aim of the school to provide a safe, secure and happy environment within which all can thrive.
- 3.19 Pupils enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities within the school community, which they discharge with a maturity beyond their years. The youngest children enjoy helping with the distribution of drinks and snacks while older pupils willingly volunteer for a wide range of practical roles within the school. These include acting as prefects and leaders of the school council and pupils who undertake them make an excellent, positive contribution to the school community. Pupils take every opportunity to help each other, and the age groups mix convivially, as was seen at break time where pupils at the top of the school mingled happily with younger pupils and helped to take responsibility for ensuring that they were safe and happy. There is a respectful friendship in the approach that pupils take to helping each other and adults. In interviews, pupils spoke of a caring, supportive and happy community in which they show real, genuine concern for each other. Pupils' social awareness is excellent, and this helps to create an extremely harmonious and engaging community. Pupils understand the importance of working within the wider community. They are involved in the local area at various events including visiting a retirement home. The annual school charity is selected by the whole school following presentations by pupils at an assembly. Pupils are proactive in devising fundraising schemes both for their chosen charity and a range of other local, national and international charities which they support.

- 3.20 Pupils understand the importance of diversity within society and the value in treating everyone equally. They show respect for, and appreciation of, their own and other cultures and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds. For example, younger pupils listened with interest and respect as their peers described how they celebrated the Passover. From time to time, there are celebrations of different faiths and cultures which result in enhanced understanding and tolerance of others. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents and almost all pupils who responded said that the school encourages an atmosphere of respect and tolerance. Pupils show an excellent knowledge of the key values that characterise modern Britain, which is developed through a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme.
- 3.21 All pupils, including children in the EYFS, benefit from a healthy lifestyle promoted at the school and have a well-developed understanding of the value of physical fitness. The youngest children understand the necessity of washing hands and personal hygiene. Discussions with pupils reveal that they are aware of the importance of healthy eating and a balanced diet. Pupils are assisted in their aim of following a healthy lifestyle by the provision of nutritious hot meals in addition to a variety of salad options and fresh fruit. The school also effectively promotes pupil's physical well-being by providing plenty of opportunity for exercise including informal play alongside formal PE and games lessons. Pupils grow to understand their own development through discussing themes such as keeping fit and healthy in their PSHE work and PE lessons. Pupils of all ages are aware of how to stay safe both physically and online and know to inform a trusted adult if they have any concerns. Almost all parents and pupils said that the school helps them to stay safe and be healthy.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr William Ibbetson-Price	Reporting inspector
Mr Malcolm Carling	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Camm	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mrs Valerie Holloway	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of nursery, IAPS school)
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Team inspector for EYFS (Former senior teacher, IAPS school)