



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BUXLOW PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## Buxlow Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Buxlow Preparatory School</b>
DfE Number	<b>304/6051</b>
Address	<b>Buxlow Preparatory School 5 Castleton Gardens Wembley Middlesex HA9 7QJ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 8904 3615</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 8904 3606</b>
Email Address	<b>buxlow.head@happychild.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Ann Baines</b>
Proprietor	<b>Happy Child Ltd</b>
Age Range	<b>4 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>86</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (53 boys; 33 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 0      5-11: 72 3-5 (EYFS): 14</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>05 Mar 2013 to 08 Mar 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 June 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 managing director, 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**

Mr William Ibbetson-Price

Mrs Janet Lowe

Mrs Sue Bennett

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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

- 1.1 Buxlow Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 4 to 11. It was founded in Wembley in 1927, and in 2004 became part of Happy Child Ltd. It is based in two semi-detached houses with a modern addition, in a residential area of Wembley. The present proprietors took over the company in 2007 and they have appointed a managing director with responsibility for governance of the school. The school aims to provide a happy and caring environment within which its pupils can achieve their academic potential. It seeks to provide pupils with the knowledge, confidence and skills that will stand them in good stead for their future years. The school values its small size and inclusive nature, welcoming pupils from many faiths and ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.2 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a fairly wide range of abilities represented. Pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the demographics of the Wembley area from which they are drawn.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has developed links with the local authority to support its provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Speech and drama have been introduced throughout the school, and the parents' association has purchased a log cabin to provide a dedicated area for music. Management structures have been reviewed and a new senior management team has recently been established.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection 86 pupils were on roll, of whom 14 were in the EYFS. The majority of pupils transfer at the age of 11 to academically selective independent and maintained senior schools. The school has identified one pupil who has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It has identified seventy pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), three of whom receive support; the remainder are bilingual.
- 1.5 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 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, pupils achieve highly and make excellent progress. They develop their knowledge, understanding and skills very effectively across a good range of subjects and activities. This is as a result of both excellent teaching and the pupils' own enthusiastic attitudes, their impeccable behaviour and their exemplary relationships with one another and their teachers. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and used effectively across the curriculum. Strong support is given to those pupils with SEND or EAL. Gifted and talented pupils are also suitably supported and challenged. The school successfully fulfils its aim to provide a safe and stimulating environment where all pupils can achieve to the best of their ability in all areas of school life, whatever their starting point. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future lives. There are excellent and well-developed systems to track pupils' attainment and progress.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent as a result of the very high quality of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the equally strong pastoral care that they receive. A major strength of the school is its caring environment and the detailed knowledge all staff have of the pupils. Pupils are unfailingly polite to visitors and treat their peers and staff with great respect. Their care for one another is embedded in all aspects of school life. They have a clear insight into their own and other cultures. Pupils willingly take on responsibility. Their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves shows in their positive approach to charitable giving.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is sound. Many of the policies and handbooks which are produced centrally by Happy Child Ltd are of excellent quality. However, the proprietors do not have effective oversight of all aspects of the school, including appropriate checking of the central register of appointments, which includes omissions relating to the proprietors, and they do not carry out the annual review of the child protection policy. The quality of leadership and management is good. Subject leaders have clear oversight of their subjects; however, this does not include the regular monitoring of teaching and sharing of the school's good teaching practice. The school began to act upon the recommendation of the previous inspection to create space within the timetable to enable co-ordinators to monitor their own subject, but this process has not yet been carried through. In the EYFS, there is not currently a formal programme of supervision for staff. Links with parents are excellent; in response to pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were positive about all aspects of the school.

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

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- implement fully the child protection policy by carrying out the annual review by the proprietors [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].
  - ensure that all the required checks are completed on company directors before they take up their positions and recorded fully in the single central register of appointments [Part 4, paragraphs 21.(6)(a)(i) and (ii), and (b)(i), (ii) and (iii), and 22.(6), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].
- 2.5 In order to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school is required to:
- put in place an appropriate formal programme of supervision for EYFS staff in support of their contact with children and families.

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

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Strengthen proprietors' oversight of the school to ensure that they discharge their governance responsibilities, and provide better stimulus and support so that priorities are agreed for the school's future development.
  2. Ensure that time is made available to enable subject co-ordinators to monitor the teaching of their subjects and promote sharing of the good practice that exists within the school.

### 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 excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims of providing the opportunity for them to achieve their academic potential. All pupils have well-developed oral and numeracy skills that they are able to apply to other areas of the curriculum, such as science and geography. Pupils make good use of ICT to support their learning and as a research tool to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Children in the EYFS are articulate, using words such as 'relaxed' and 'scary' to describe story characters. They keenly answer questions, and confidently performed a group poem for visitors. All pupils achieve highly in their literacy skills, reading text competently and identifying phonemes and digraphs within words as they spell them. They listen carefully to both their teachers and each other, read fluently and expressively, and are highly skilled in writing imaginatively. In the EYFS, children use apparatus to make number bonds to ten. They count confidently in tens to one hundred and name different synonyms for subtraction.
- 3.3 Pupils' creative work is of a high standard, as observed in the many displays around the school and in subjects such as art. Their understanding of different genres in art and of the work of different artists is a particular strength. Pupils of all ages are keen to learn and commit themselves to producing work of the highest standards, taking immense pride in their achievements. Pupils' investigative skills are honed through independent research, which was seen in a number of subjects including a Year 3 history topic on the Egyptians. Pupils' physical skills are well developed through their weekly swimming and games sessions at a nearby sports centre. Children in the EYFS enjoy using the equipment in the playground, which helps them to develop their motor skills.
- 3.4 Pupils are very successful in a range of activities, such as music and drama. The chamber choir recently sang at Kew Gardens and is presently rehearsing for an ambitious performance of *Beauty and the Beast*. Pupils' standards in London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art speech and drama awards are high, with over 80 per cent of pupils gaining a merit or distinction. Pupils enjoy success in extra-curricular activities, such as Tae Kwon Do and the sewing club. Children in the EYFS have many opportunities to be creative, such as designing their Mother's Day cards and using tools and printers when playing with malleable dough.
- 3.5 From the inspection of pupils' books and from work seen in lessons, attainment is judged to be well above average compared with national age-related expectations. By the end of Reception most children reach their expected attainment levels, in relation to their starting points, with the majority exceeding the Early Learning Goals.
- 3.6 Pupils' progress is excellent throughout the school in relation to their ability. This enables them to attain the level required for success in highly competitive entry examinations to senior schools, with a significant number gaining scholarships. Pupils with SEND or EAL make an equally good rate of progress due to the excellent support they receive in class. Pupils who are gifted and talented make excellent progress because questioning and extension tasks support and extend pupils' individual needs.

3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. In the EYFS, children concentrate exceptionally well and enjoy active learning opportunities. From Year 1, pupils approach tasks with enthusiasm and persevere when they are challenging. Pupils work well co-operatively and independently, and take pride in the presentation of their work. The excellent relationships forged with their teachers and with each other impact positively on their achievements.

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

3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.

3.9 The provision offers a broad and balanced curriculum, suitable for pupils of all ages and abilities. In line with the school's aims, a significant amount of time is given to numeracy and literacy, ensuring that the pupils have an excellent grounding in these key skills. The curriculum is well supported by a suitable range of extra-curricular activities for all pupils, including those in the EYFS.

3.10 Pupils throughout the school, including the EYFS, benefit from specialist teaching in French, music, ICT, sport, speech and drama. Resources such as the ICT room and music room are well used to support the curriculum. Pupils benefit from a well-stocked library that is used in lessons and for individual reading. Whole-school curriculum days for design technology enable pupils to see a project through from the planning stage to completion. Themed weeks, such as Book Week, provide a varied programme of activities, including a visit by an author. A comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme reflects the school's aims and ethos, and is particularly effective in supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils are given good opportunities to express their creativity in art, drama and music. Instrumental lessons in singing, guitar, violin and recorders are provided, and pupils are working towards Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music grade examinations. Three choirs, including an elite chamber choir, provide pupils with opportunities to perform together and they have participated in the Young Voices performance at the O2 Arena. Pupils benefit greatly from the use of local sports facilities, and the opportunity to compete against other schools in games fixtures. However, these opportunities are limited.

3.11 Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported. These pupils have individual education plans that are reviewed regularly and, when appropriate, programmes of study are adapted to meet their needs. The EYFS staff make excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend, including help and support from external specialists if necessary. Inclusivity has a high focus within the setting. Staff plan stimulating educational programmes that excite children and motivate them to learn. Teachers across the school have identified gifted and talented pupils, and in the best lessons provision is made for the most able. The school supports and encourages those pupils identified as having particular talents in areas such as Tae Kwon Do, singing and cricket. Year 6 pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their education.

3.12 The curriculum is enriched by an excellent programme of educational trips and visits, both locally and nationally. A residential trip to an activity centre is available for pupils from Years 4 to 6. Activities are highly effective in supporting programmes of study and cross-curricular themes. Visitors, such as drama and dance performers, come into the school to enhance the pupils' learning experiences. All pupils, including the EYFS, have access to a suitable range of extra-curricular activities that include art, ICT, cooking and chess. These broaden pupils' creative and physical

experiences and they value and enjoy them. The pupils gain an understanding of their community through the school's good links, with visits from a church minister to take assemblies, and a local community police officer to support the EYFS 'People who help us' topic.

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

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 At all levels, the quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress, and to fulfilling the school's aims of enabling pupils to achieve their academic potential. Pupils benefit from teaching that is very well planned, engaging and delivered with enthusiasm. In the EYFS, experienced staff have an excellent knowledge of how young children learn and set high expectations. They actively engage with children during activities, motivating them to explore and extend their understanding. Planned activities include an excellent balance of adult-directed and child-initiated learning. The vibrant indoor environment is well organised, whilst the outdoor area effectively supports physical activities and extended learning opportunities. Staff use high quality questioning techniques to challenge children's thinking. Resources are age appropriate and provide exciting investigative opportunities for children, such as exploring the tool icons on the computer, preparing them extremely well for the next stages in their learning.
- 3.15 Pupils' progress is discussed at weekly staff meetings, and this, coupled with small class sizes, ensures that teachers know their pupils extremely well and can take good account of their individual needs. Teachers are also well aware of their pupils' prior knowledge, and this helps to ensure tightly focused lessons that are tailored to the abilities of all, including the most able and those with SEND or EAL. Teachers' high expectations for their pupils enhance their learning. Pupils are consistently encouraged to make the most of their intellectual, physical and creative talents.
- 3.16 Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils of all abilities are confident about asking for help, and in interviews many expressed their appreciation for the way staff support their learning. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect and add to the pupils' enjoyment of the subjects being studied, as well as promoting their effort. Almost all teaching includes clear objectives and explanation, and is characterised by good pace and challenge. In a small amount of less effective teaching, expectations are lower and questions are less stimulating; consequently, the pupils' progress is slower.
- 3.17 Teachers make good use of a wide range of teaching methods and a variety of activities in lessons, which capture the pupils' interest and meet their varied needs. A significant feature of the teaching is the way that pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, for example with the use of open-ended questions. Teachers are knowledgeable, and make good use of the available resources, including ICT, to produce interesting and stimulating lessons, to share pupils' views and to illustrate more complex ideas. Teachers use the time available in lessons effectively and this promotes behaviour of a high standard. Pupils' previous learning is consolidated through brisk questioning at the start of lessons.
- 3.18 Teachers' marking is regular and generally consistent, and pupils receive advice as to how they might improve their work. Where written comments are briefer, pupils confirm that helpful oral feedback is given. Pupils greatly appreciate both the verbal

praise and encouragement they are given as well as house points and other rewards, which spur them on to greater efforts.

- 3.19 Efficient and comprehensive assessment procedures are in place and these enable pupils' progress to be effectively tracked and measures to be taken if their progress falls behind expect norms. Targets are provided to pupils to enable improvement. Effective use is made of this information to plan lessons and homework. Thorough observation and assessment processes enable staff to track EYFS children's progress, which supports individual needs very well and helps to identify future learning targets.

## **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 personal development of the pupils is excellent, successfully meeting the aims of the school, and is a significant strength. Pupils exhibit an outstanding level of moral and spiritual awareness, and as a community they are sensitive and caring, with a high regard for others. The school provides a positive, friendly and warm environment where pupils are happy and confident and where successes are celebrated, as in a whole-school assembly where those pupils who had achieved especially well that week were given a round of applause.
- 4.3 The spiritual awareness of pupils is excellent. They are given regular opportunities to reflect on faith in religious education and PSHE lessons, in assemblies with visitors such as Buddhist monks, and during local visits to places of worship, such as a synagogue. Pupils of different abilities, faiths and cultures feel valued members of the school community. Pupils respond very positively to the praise and reward system used by the school, including stickers, house points and the Good to be Green 'traffic light' system. They display high levels of self-esteem due to the constant positive messages they receive.
- 4.4 Pupils display excellent moral development. They listen carefully, and value and respect the ideas and opinions of others, and they are willing and confident to articulate their own views. In a Year 6 PSHE lesson, pupils discussed their concerns and hopes for the transition to senior school. Pupils of all ages display a strong sense of right and wrong, and they understand and respect the school rules. They are keenly aware that there are others less fortunate than themselves. They assist them through charity work and participating in a number of fund-raising events for local and national causes, such as the Poppy Appeal, Shelter and a local hospice. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and reflects the respectful relationships that exist within the school community.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. They are confident and self-assured; their manners are excellent. Pupils greet and converse with visitors warmly and are very proud of their school. In the EYFS, children play happily together and show consideration for the needs of their friends, explaining that 'sharing is caring'. By the end of their time in Reception, children are self-reliant individuals, who confidently make choices and decisions, preparing them well for their next phase in learning.
- 4.6 The pupils' questionnaire responses made clear how positive they feel about their school: many talked of it as being like a second home. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility from an early age, with class representatives on the school council. All those in Year 6 benefit from the opportunities they have to take on roles of responsibility such as school and house captains, prefects and librarians, and they also have occasional opportunities to read with Reception before school.
- 4.7 Pupils show excellent cultural development, and are sensitive to and respectful of cultural differences within the school community. Pupils' good understanding of different cultures and faiths is promoted by teachers' use of the opportunities afforded by the diversity within the school. The school council gives them an understanding of elections and the fundamental Western concept of democracy. The programme of educational visits to museums and places of other faiths and

cultural interest, such as outings to a synagogue, the National Maritime Museum and the Verulamium Museum, helps pupils to appreciate their own and other traditions and cultures. Pupils enjoy studying the work of different genres in art and music from across ages and continents.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school fulfils its aim to provide a happy, caring environment where the uniqueness of each pupil is recognised. A strong sense of community exists and pupils show kindness to each other. Staff, including those in the EYFS, are exemplary role models, who work hard to ensure good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and themselves. During interviews and conversations, pupils talked about the high quality supportive relationships that staff foster and the guidance they offer. Pupils were clear to whom they could turn with a concern.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyle attitudes, and have good opportunities for physical exercise in the outdoor area and during physical education lessons. All lunches and snacks are brought from home, although staff monitor what pupils eat and encourage parents to provide healthy foods. Within the EYFS, provision for children's well-being is excellent. Key people know children extremely well, enabling secure emotional attachments to be formed. Children comfortably turn to staff for support and guidance when feeling unwell or needing help with an activity. They interact positively with their peers and appreciate the reasons for sharing toys and taking turns. They actively support their friends, helping them to complete puzzles and build models during constructional play. Children's awareness of healthy lifestyles is extremely well promoted through daily opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise in the outdoor area. They understand the importance of eating healthy snacks and lunches. Children are independent in their self-care routines, appreciating the reasons for putting on coats for outside play, and washing hands before eating, supporting their personal hygiene awareness.
- 4.11 The school has a strong commitment to promoting positive behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are fair. Approaches, such as the 'traffic light' system, together with 'golden rules', effectively promote positive behaviour amongst the pupils, who have a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour and report that bullying or harassment of any kind are extremely rare. They know that if any such incidences were to occur, they would be dealt with promptly and fairly. Highly effective policies and procedures support the pastoral arrangements. These provide comprehensive guidance for staff, ensuring a consistent approach to unacceptable behaviour, and include due account of any related difficulty or disability. Pupils have effective opportunities to voice their opinions through the school council representatives. They also have easy access to senior managers who supportively listen and act on their views.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.14 Throughout, the well-being of pupils is central to the school's concern and its procedures for ensuring this contribute to the happiness of the pupils, as expressed in the school's aims.
- 4.15 Effective attention is paid to safeguarding pupils and promoting their health and well-being. The school's child protection policy has been recently updated and is now compliant in content, but not in implementation concerning the proprietors' annual review. Safeguarding procedures are largely rigorous and are implemented effectively in the appointment of new staff but not in the appointment of proprietors. The school makes provision for regular training in child protection for all staff.
- 4.16 Robust arrangements are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Fire drills are carried out regularly, and fire equipment is routinely and regularly checked. An external specialist assists with the provision of risk assessments for each area of the school site. Visits are carefully planned with the pupils' safety always in mind and comprehensive risk assessments are produced for every trip.
- 4.17 Within the EYFS, staff strongly promote children's understanding of safety, such as taking care with scissors and moving around the classroom with care. Practice on a day-to-day basis ensures that children's safeguarding and welfare needs are met. Children have excellent relationships with the staff who care for them, which ensures that they feel safe and secure within the setting. These processes help the setting to be a nurturing, welcoming and stimulating environment for children to enjoy.
- 4.18 A suitable first-aid policy is in place and all requirements are fully met, including the provision of a room for pupils who become ill during the day. All staff have received paediatric first-aid training. Staff ensure that parents give the necessary permissions for medication and are informed when it has been administered.
- 4.19 Attendance and admission registers are completed and stored correctly.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 Oversight of some aspects of the school by the proprietors is robust, although there are also a few significant areas where it has been inadequate. Centralised financial planning and management provide support to the school and there has been appropriate investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The centrally produced policies and handbooks are of excellent quality, and good use is made of outside expertise in matters such as fire prevention and risk assessment. Termly meetings with all the heads in the group allow an exchange of ideas, and group strategy to be agreed.
- 5.3 The managing director visits the school regularly, which ensures that she is known and provides an element of support to the staff. While she has a good insight into the working of the school, monitoring of some policies and risk assessments has been ineffective, and the proprietors have not ensured that the annual review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements throughout the school has been carried out thoroughly. Two of the proprietors are not included on the single central register of appointments and the required checks have not been carried out.
- 5.4 The proprietors do not have oversight of the school improvement plan and so are unable to provide sufficient support or challenge for management and stimulus for growth and improvement of the school.
- 5.5 The EYFS receives satisfactory levels of support from the proprietors.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management is good overall.
- 5.7 Leadership and management are effective in promoting the school's aims, and this is reflected in the strong levels of pupils' achievements across a broad spectrum of curricular and extra-curricular activities. The pupils' outstanding personal development is a direct response to the excellent quality of pastoral care they receive. The success of the school in fulfilling its aims was clearly reflected in the overwhelmingly positive response of parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire, in which very few negative views were expressed.
- 5.8 Management has ensured that a unity of purpose has been established whereby all staff strive for pupils to achieve their potential within a happy, caring environment. Regular staff meetings ensure that staff are kept well informed and feel highly involved in sustaining the caring, family ethos of the school. In the EYFS, weekly meetings facilitate effective practice review and some processes of self-evaluation, although there are no formal meetings between EYFS staff and senior managers to support the full monitoring of the provision.
- 5.9 Management within the school exercises effective responsibility for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their welfare. Children in the EYFS are carefully safeguarded and great attention is paid to their safety and well-being. Policies and procedures for

the appointment of staff are well developed and robustly implemented, although two of the proprietors have been omitted from the single central register and have not been checked on appointment as required. Staff are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety.

- 5.10 The school improvement plan is limited to curriculum development, with individual subject co-ordinators producing their own plans, devised following both formal and informal staff meetings. There is an overarching plan which reflects the management and proprietors' vision for the future development of the school. Additionally, the school does not include the EYFS in development planning to enable continuous improvement and fully support outcomes for children. All staff have an annual appraisal, which focuses upon personal development and the training needs identified by the teachers themselves, but does not include any formal monitoring of teaching. Senior EYFS leaders and managers are unclear about the setting's future development, resulting in a lack of EYFS inclusiveness in the whole-school vision. The setting receives regular supportive guidance from the local authority EYFS advisor. Although leadership and management are effective, a formal programme of supervision for EYFS staff is not currently in place. Since the previous inspection, the EYFS staff team has been newly appointed and improvements have been made to communication links with parents and assessment processes.
- 5.11 The role of subject co-ordinators is not yet fully effective. The previous inspection recommended that the school should create space within the structure of the timetable to enable co-ordinators to monitor their own subjects effectively. While work in this area was begun it has not been sustained, and minimal monitoring currently takes place. Staff have few opportunities to observe others teach in order to identify and share more widely, across subjects and age groups, the excellent practice that exists within the school. The senior management team is new and management structures and responsibilities are in the process of being developed.
- 5.12 The EYFS senior managers have a clear understanding of statutory learning and development requirements. The educational programmes are regularly monitored through weekly planning reviews. The supervision of staff is inconsistent. Although staff review processes are in place, they are not formalised to support new staff efficiently and do not yet include lesson observations to monitor teaching. Good opportunities exist for EYFS staff to further their professional development by attending local authority training courses.
- 5.13 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent, and the majority of parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed them to be extremely happy with the school's provision for their children. A very small minority of parents of children in the EYFS expressed concerns about behavioural issues, and a few parents of pupils in the rest of the school felt that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. The inspectors found no evidence to support these views. During discussions and in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, parents of EYFS children commented positively on the setting's high quality care and children's excellent progress and happiness. Any complaints or concerns raised by parents are effectively dealt with, in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.
- 5.14 From EYFS onwards there is open, easy communication and personal interaction, with all parents and pupils being greeted at the school gate at the beginning and end of the day. Staff are readily available to speak to parents and aim to deal with any issues as soon as they arise.

- 5.15 Many opportunities are in place for parents to be involved in the life of the school. They are invited to weekly class assemblies and accompany pupils on school outings. Parents also enhance the curriculum by visiting to talk to the pupils about their specialist knowledge. Links with parents are strengthened by the parents' association, Friends of Buxlow, which is strongly supportive of the school. School fairs help to raise funds for items such as the recently purchased Red Room, which is a valuable resource used primarily for music lessons. Detailed information is readily available to parents of current and prospective pupils through the prospectus and school website, and regular, comprehensive newsletters are produced covering many aspects of school life.
- 5.16 Within the EYFS, partnerships with parents and external agencies are strong, ensuring that children's individual needs are extremely well supported. Home message books and the school's 'open door' policy provide excellent communication channels between staff and parents. Formal meetings and opportunities to view learning journals keep parents extremely well informed about their children's progress and achievements. New children settle quickly because of the highly effective systems that staff have in place, which support their smooth transitions.
- 5.17 Throughout the school, reporting to parents with information about their children's progress is good, contrary to the views of a small minority of parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Parents are invited to regular parents' evenings, giving them the opportunity to discuss their children's progress formally twice a year, with an informal information evening at the beginning of each year. Detailed reports on academic achievements and progress are provided twice yearly. Targets are set for the pupils and 'How you can help' pointers are included for parents.

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