



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
BROMSGROVE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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Bromsgrove Preparatory School

The senior school was inspection at the same time and a separate report published

Full Name of School	Bromsgrove Preparatory School		
DfE Number	885/6006		
Registered Charity Number	1098740		
Address	Bromsgrove Preparatory School Old Station Road Bromsgrove Worcestershire B60 2AD England		
Telephone Number	01527 579600		
Fax Number	01527 579571		
Email Address	jdevalreed@bromsgrove-school.co.uk		
Head	Mrs Jacquelyne Deval-Reed		
Chair of Governors	Mr Stuart Towe		
Age Range	2 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	708		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (366 boys; 342 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 381
	3-5 (EYFS):	109	11-18: 218
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	642	
Number of Boarders	Total:	66	
	Full:	57	Weekly: 9
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sharon Symonds		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	26 Jan 2016 to 29 Jan 2016		

PREFACE

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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in March 2014, and the previous ISI standard inspection was in March 2010.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. The senior school was inspected at the same time, but is not part of this report.

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.

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

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 children aged under two), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' 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 representatives of the governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and 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

Lady Fiona Mynors	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Annabelle Hancock	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr Jonathan Carroll	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sarah Graham	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Tracy Handford	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Paul Leeming	Team Inspector (Director of Sport and Activities, GDST school)
Mr Christopher Gatherer	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Catherine Peuleve	Team Inspector (Head of Lower Years, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Scott	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Andrew Nott	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Kathryn Henry	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Bromsgrove preparatory (prep) and pre-preparatory (pre-prep) schools cater for girls and boys between the ages of two and thirteen. They are managed together under one headmistress as part of the Bromsgrove group of schools, which are overseen by the headmaster of the senior school. The headmistress is part of the executive committee which develops a strategic vision for all three schools which are governed together as part of an educational trust by its trustees.
- 1.2 The prep school was formed in 1940 to meet the needs of the siblings of pupils in the senior school. It is sited adjacent to the senior school and pupils share their sports facilities. A pre-prep school was added in 1986 and moved to Avoncroft House, set within its own grounds, in 2000. It is approximately two miles from the prep school. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which is exempt from the EYFS requirements, is an integral part of the pre-prep school. Boarders from many different countries are housed in Page House, which is adjacent to the prep school.
- 1.3 The aims of the Bromsgrove schools are to develop happy, creative and moral citizens who are motivated, live fulfilled lives and enrich those of others. The prep and pre-prep schools aim to provide an all-round educational experience in a nurturing environment which encourages pupils to be creative and independent learners. A particular focus is placed on promoting compassion, tolerance, self-respect and respect for others.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, additional facilities have been developed and areas of the school have been extended and re-furnished. Management systems have been re-structured, and new appointments made to increase the size of the senior management teams. In September 2015, the prep and senior school timetables were synchronised and shared specialist teaching was introduced.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection there were 708 pupils on roll. In the pre-prep school there were 109 children in the EYFS and 101 pupils in Years 1 and 2. In the prep school there were 280 pupils in Years 3 to 6, and 218 in Years 7 and 8. Of the 66 boarders, 9 board weekly and the remainder full-time. Day pupils are predominantly from business and professional families of white British origin. A few pupils come from minority ethnic families. The ability profile of the school is slightly above the national average. There is a fairly wide spread of abilities represented, although most pupils have ability that is either in line with or above the national average.
- 1.6 The school has identified 36 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who all receive support. Twenty-six pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), and sixteen receive support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an educational health and care plan.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning, including in the EYFS is excellent. Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. By the end of Reception, children achieve and frequently exceed the Early Learning Goals. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make excellent progress because the excellent quality of teaching ensures that their individual needs are most efficiently met. Support is provided when necessary, and more able pupils are given additional challenges. Teaching is frequently inspirational, particularly in the pre-prep. Pupils enjoy their learning, work easily alone, in groups or pairs and are confident to research for themselves. The pupils benefit from the broad, dynamic curriculum which gives them numerous opportunities to discover where their particular talents lie, and the means to develop them. Their experiences are further enriched by curriculum visits and an outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities. Each year a significant number of pupils achieve academic and non-academic awards to the senior school.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils, including children in the EYFS, is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate excellent personal qualities. They are mature and confident, keen to take responsibility and always willing to help others. The pupils are strongly supported by the excellent pastoral policies and procedures, carefully implemented by staff. In the pre-prep, pupils have excellent opportunities to voice their opinions, but, in the prep, formal opportunities for them to contribute their opinions are more limited. The quality of boarding is good. Boarders are well cared for and enjoy their time in boarding. Leadership and management arrangements for boarding do not always meet the needs of boarders of this age, and a development plan outlining a vision for boarding development is not yet in place. Across the school, arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. The governing body has ensured that the school is extremely successful in achieving its aims. Governors have strong links with the EYFS provision. They are assiduous in discharging their legal responsibilities for compliance with statutory requirements. A detailed review of the safeguarding policy and its effective implementation is undertaken annually. The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent enabling pupils to become mature young people well prepared for the next stage of their education and beyond. In the EYFS, a welcoming, stimulating learning environment reflects the aim of the setting to give the best possible experience to each individual child. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents of pupils of all ages were overwhelmingly satisfied with the care and education provided by the school, and almost all would recommend it to others; pupils said they are happy to be at school. All the recommendations from the previous inspection have been implemented effectively.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Provide more formal opportunities for pupils in the prep school to express their views and opinions.
 2. In boarding, ensure that the leadership and management arrangements meet the needs of boarders of this age, and develop an effective vision for future development.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims to enable them to fulfil their potential and be creative, independent learners. Throughout the EYFS, most children exceed age related expectations across all areas of learning. All children, including those with SEND or EAL and the most able, make excellent progress relative to their starting points, abilities and needs. The youngest children in the Nursery speak with increasing confidence. When discussing how to make a cake, they described how they would measure out the ingredients and predicted what might happen when they were mixed together. Reception children have excellent communication skills and discuss the merits of different programs they use on the desktop computer. The youngest Nursery children are beginning to recognise numbers, and delight in counting out pieces of fruit. Older Nursery children identify regular two dimensional shapes. In Reception the most able children recognise numbers within a one hundred square and identify numbers that are bigger or smaller than a given number. All children have well-developed small and gross motor skills across a wide range of activities.
- 3.3 The children are active and independent learners who access and use a wide range of resources confidently and competently in order to explore and investigate their ideas. This includes using tablet computers and programmable toys. They are confident and happy, talk animatedly about what they are doing and participate enthusiastically in learning activities both inside and outside the classroom. By the end of Reception, all children achieve and frequently exceed the level of development typical for their age.
- 3.4 From Year 1, all pupils have excellent knowledge, understanding and skills across the full range of subjects and activities. They are confident, enthusiastic and articulate when responding to questions in interviews; pupils spoke in an informed way about their work, demonstrated advanced reasoning skills and used an extensive vocabulary. In lessons they listen attentively and demonstrate respect for the views of others whilst extending their own learning. The pupils' literacy skills are high. They analyse texts, develop interesting poems and write imaginatively using mature vocabulary. They enjoy reading with confidence and appropriate expression. The pupils' mathematical skills are strong, and they apply them extremely well in all their subjects. They investigate and research efficiently, and think logically and independently. The pupils use their ICT skills most efficiently across the curriculum, a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils' creative and physical skills are excellent, with high standards of achievement in music, art, drama, physical education and games. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve well through the careful support they receive. The most able achieve high standards as they receive additional challenges in lessons.
- 3.5 The pupils enjoy success when competing both individually and in teams across a wide range of activities. Netball and swimming teams have been regional and national finalists in IAPS competitions, and cricket teams have been county champions. Pupils have been successful in the UK Mathematics Challenge, a national coding and gaming competition, and winners of a national schools gardening competition. Many pupils learn at least one instrument and have gained excellent results in external music, dance and drama examinations. Each year a

significant number of pupils gain academic and non-academic awards to the senior school.

- 3.6 The pupil's attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but based on standardised tests, lesson observation, scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils, it is judged to be excellent in relation to pupils of similar ability. All pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and the most able, make excellent progress as they move up the school through the support and challenge they receive at the appropriate level for each pupil's needs and abilities.
- 3.7 Pupils have a positive approach to their learning which contributes significantly to their success. They settle quickly to tasks set and are confident to take risks in their learning. They work independently, in pairs or groups, co-operating and supporting each other when necessary. Since the previous inspection, pupils in the pre-prep have become confident independent learners, relishing the many opportunities they have to explore and research for themselves. In their questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of pupils and parents were pleased with the progress made at school.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 Educational programmes in the EYFS enable all children to make good progress in relation to their starting points. Well-resourced classrooms and outdoor areas give children rich and varied experiences, which promote independent learning and critical thinking. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, staff have developed detailed planning for the outdoor environment which promotes children's development across all areas of learning. A highly effective balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities ensures children are appropriately challenged and supported to match their needs. Staff make learning enjoyable as observed in the Nursery when children moved energetically to develop their gross motor skills. Weekly visits to the woodland learning environment greatly enhances children's awareness of the natural world.
- 3.10 The broad, dynamic curriculum for Years 1 to 8 strongly supports the school's ethos to create independent learners. It provides pupils with numerous opportunities for them to discover where their particular talents lie, and the means to develop them. It is well planned to provide pupils with both challenge and support when required. In the pre-prep, most of the work is generated through the use of the creative curriculum developing out of EYFS. This involves a cross-curricular approach which incorporates all areas of the curriculum which provides pupils with a memorable learning experience. The curriculum is enriched by the specialist teaching of music from Year 1 and French from Year 2.
- 3.11 In the pre-prep and Years 3 and 4, teaching is mainly class-based to provide a firm foundation. All pupils in Year 3 have the opportunity to play a stringed instrument. From Year 5, pupils benefit from specialist teaching, careful setting and groupings by ability to ensure that their needs are met efficiently. Their linguistic skills are enhanced by an increasing number of languages taught in Years 7 and 8. A balanced approach is taken to the consideration of political issues across the curriculum. As recommended in the previous inspection, ICT is now fully developed across the curriculum. All pupils benefit from a well-planned and comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education programme (PSHEE) with regular

discussions about how to use the internet safely. Visitors to the school, such as a dentist, author or magistrate give pupils the opportunity to consider possible career possibilities for their future life. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were highly appreciative of the range of subjects on offer to their children.

- 3.12 Clear progression in the curriculum between all sections of the school is supported by a detailed policy linked to the three-year curriculum development plan. Meticulous planning and regular review of the curriculum enables pupils to progress seamlessly through the school. The extension of the creative curriculum, used in the pre-prep, into Years 3 and 4, and the synchronisation of lesson times in the prep and senior schools have increased the opportunity for more integration between departments which benefits both staff and pupils.
- 3.13 Systems and procedures to identify and support pupils who need additional help are excellent. The learning support department is well resourced and imaginative teaching ensures that pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils with EAL receive individual lessons and appropriate support in class. For pupils with SEND, individual education plans are drawn up, distributed to all teachers and regularly discussed with parents. The programmes are individualised and heavily kinaesthetic.
- 3.14 The pupils' experiences are enriched by a broad programme of workshops and visits such as a cross-curricular art and religious education (RE) visit to Belmont Abbey. In their responses to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils were appreciative of the opportunities available for them. The extensive school grounds are used imaginatively, and pupils' independence is strengthened by a variety of residential trips in Britain and abroad. An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities is available to suit all tastes, which range from fife and ballet in the pre-prep to cookery and computing in the prep. Many musical ensembles and opportunities for drama are provided. A strong fixture list supports an excellent sports' curriculum, which enables all pupils to have the opportunity of representing their school. During the week of the inspection, 27 sports teams were competing in tournaments. Additional activities are provided for those who choose to attend school on Saturday mornings. Pupils gain an awareness of the local community through fund-raising for local charities, the choir singing at a home for senior citizens, and visiting a middle school to share their experiences of developing a system of buddies to support those who feel they need help with friendship or bullying difficulties.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Teaching across the school is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and strongly supporting the school's aims. In the EYFS, the teachers' detailed knowledge of the children provides excellent support and encouragement, which promotes their learning. In the Nursery, staff demonstrate physical activities and singing to motivate children and ensure that they enjoy their experiences. Staff plan many practical activities using high quality resources which encourage children to investigate materials and be creative when using them. Skilful open-ended questions, tailored to the needs of different groups of children, support new learning and extend their thinking. Staff have high expectations of all children. This is particularly evident in the structured teaching of sounds in Reception which has contributed to the development of strong reading and writing skills. Well-planned support for children with SEND or EAL ensures that they grow in confidence and

make excellent progress. Focused assessment is used well to identify children's individual needs and the next steps in their learning and development.

- 3.17 From Year 1, teaching is of high quality and frequently inspirational, particularly in the pre-prep. Teaching is meticulously and consistently planned to take account of pupils' needs and abilities, their prior attainment and what they should learn next. It enables pupils to be engaged, creative and make excellent progress. Relationships in lessons are excellent and pupils enjoy learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and high expectations. Lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace. Careful planning, good use of time and the imaginative use of varied activities ensure that pupils remain full engaged and work well. In few less successful lessons, time was not managed efficiently, pupils lost focus and they were unable to achieve at the best level. Teachers are efficient in their use of excellent resources. As recommended in the previous inspection, ICT is now used for teaching in many lessons with imagination and flair. Teaching assistants are extremely well deployed across the school, and play a significant role in the progress of the pupils.
- 3.18 In the pre-prep, marking is consistently good. From Year 3, most marking is constructive and useful, although on occasions it is cursory. In the best examples, target setting is clear and pupils are given the opportunity to feedback on targets and comments, either by signing the comment or by adding their own comments. In interviews, pupils of all ages stated that they felt that marking was helpful, they understood how they were progressing and how they could improve their work. They appreciated individual feedback in lessons. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils had concerns over the volume of homework and its value in their learning. A scrutiny of the homework timetable and pupils' books, and observation of work set in lessons, indicates that the homework set and its volume is reasonable and useful to support pupils' learning. This view was endorsed in interviews with pupils. In questionnaires, an overwhelming majority of pupils stated that teaching helps them to learn.
- 3.19 Assessment systems are excellent. During lessons, teachers frequently check pupils' understanding of their work, before moving on to the next activity. Regular, efficient formal assessments are used extremely well to track the pupils' progress and attainment, to inform planning and to give feedback to pupils and parents. In addition, the school has developed its own *Martlet Award* scheme. This offers a bespoke system for Years 1 to 5 to monitor all aspects of each pupil's development, both academic and non-academic. This reinforces the school's ethos to give value to each individual and their particular strengths. This system is being extended in to Year 6.
- 3.20 Teaching fosters a passionate interest and a natural independence in pupils at every level. Pupils enjoy the 'push it' activities in the pre-prep, and 'stretch' activities in the prep. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect, and is non-partisan in the presentation of political issues. Teachers are excellent role models. They encourage mutual respect through their courteous treatment of the pupils and the use of a measured tone, without the need to raise their voices, so that a quiet purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils are encouraged to seek answers for themselves, and in lessons activities are carefully matched to meet their needs. Pupils with SEND and EAL receive excellent support. More able pupils relish the additional tasks they are set.

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 the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 In line with its aims, the school is highly successful in promoting values which enable pupils to develop compassion, tolerance, self-respect and respect for others. The personal and social skills of the children in the EYFS are excellent. They show respect for one another by listening carefully and working co-operatively in an environment where core British values are promoted through discussion and positive role models. Children develop skills for the future by operating a suitable range of ICT equipment. They can record their learning and access it independently at a later stage to review their understanding. They take responsibility for themselves, for example by changing independently into waterproof clothing for the outdoor environment. Children are well prepared for transition to new classes. Excellent communication between staff, visits to the new environment and the integration of all EYFS children with older pupils during some playtimes and assemblies helps children to feel secure and confident as they move up the school.
- 4.3 From Year 1, pupils have excellent spiritual awareness, strongly supported by the school's ethos of warmth and mutual support. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem because of the constantly positive messages they receive about their own successes. They are confident to put forward their own views in a thoughtful yet robust way. They display a caring sensitivity to others' needs and are emotionally mature. They reflect on the non-material aspects of life during assemblies and chapel services and are inspired by the enjoyment of the beauty of nature in the outdoor environment. The chaplaincy plays a central role in supporting all members of the school community in developing their individual spirituality.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a clear sense of right and wrong from an early age. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the need for rules and respect for the 'Bromsgrove Core Values', which reflect British core values and the rule of law in England. Pupils' behaviour is usually exemplary, and older pupils see it as part of their role to support younger pupils informally when necessary. The PSHEE programme gives pupils the opportunity to discuss moral dilemmas in a mature way. They demonstrate their moral awareness in their support of charities. In the pre-prep pupils were given a pound by Father Christmas to donate to a charity and, in the prep, pupils vote for two charities and decide how to raise money as part of the annual charities week.
- 4.5 The strong relationships throughout the school are the result of the pupils' excellent social development within a caring community. Pupils get on well together and enjoy their time in school, as was strongly expressed in their interviews. They relish their opportunities to undertake responsibilities, which they do conscientiously. Older pupils regularly support younger pupils as class monitors, and pupils take responsibility as part of the anti-bullying buddy system. Pupils gain an understanding of the democratic processes by voting for which charity to support, and for voting for membership of the school council and form and house captains. Pupils develop a good understanding of public services and institutions in Britain through the curriculum by studying the workings of parliament and democracy, and through visits from representatives of the magistracy, police and fire brigade.

- 4.6 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They are highly sensitive and particularly respectful of cultural differences as represented within the school community. Assembly themes and PHSEE lessons enable pupils to recognise and combat discrimination, and this is reflected in the way in which they treat each other fairly. Pupils know about their own culture through the school's Christian tradition, and the breadth of the curriculum and visits to local cultural places. They understand about different world religions and traditions through religious education lessons, and pupils from different traditions are encouraged to share experiences of their own festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.
- 4.7 By the time they leave the school the pupils have an outstanding level of personal development.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The nurturing, disciplined atmosphere reflects the school's Christian ethos and strongly supports its aims. In the EYFS all staff work together to provide a high standard of care in a happy and purposeful environment. The key worker system works well to ensure that each child's needs are met and that they feel safe, secure and settle in quickly. Across the setting, strong and positive relationships contribute to the children's growing confidence. They learn about the importance of eating nutritious food and are encouraged to make healthy choices for snacks and at lunchtime. Outdoor play provides excellent opportunities for regular exercise. Good hygiene practices are encouraged, and children recognise the importance of washing their hands before eating.
- 4.10 From Year 1, excellent pastoral policies and procedures, carefully implemented by staff, provide strong pastoral support and guidance for the pupils. Positive relationships are underpinned by mutual respect between adults and pupils, and also between pupils. Staff regularly discuss any pastoral concerns and detailed records are maintained. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents felt that their children are well looked after.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through developing healthy eating habits and taking regular exercise through the extensive sports' programme. Up to Year 6, pupils have a good choice of nutritious food at the prep school. A majority of pupils in Years 7 and 8 expressed dissatisfaction with the food they were offered at the senior school. Menus were scrutinised and lunches were sampled. The inspection judgement is that the food is of good quality and nutritious. In discussion with pupils eating the lunches, they commented on how much they enjoyed them, especially the choices on offer.
- 4.12 The school has clear policies to promote good behaviour and to guard against harassment. Pupils were consulted about bullying. As a result, a pupil-led anti-bullying policy including cyberbullying was developed, and an anti-bullying week introduced. Trained staff co-ordinate the policies, ensure their effective implementation and maintain meticulous records which allow any patterns of behaviour to be identified. A buddy system has also been introduced to support pupils. In questionnaires, a few parents and pupils were concerned about the way the school dealt with bullying. Careful scrutiny of records and discussions with pupils indicate that teachers implement policies in line with agreed procedures. The

rewards and sanctions system is well understood and pupils feel that it is applied fairly during the daytime at school.

- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils in the school with significant needs have excellent support, and plans are in place to continue this support as they progress up the school.
- 4.14 The school has effective methods overall to seek the views of pupils. In the pre-prep, pupils have excellent opportunities to voice their opinions. In response to the pupils' questionnaire, a minority of pupils in the prep felt that the school does not ask for or respond to their opinions. Although the school has sought the views of the pupils through occasional formal pupil surveys, and in the past the pupil council has been a forum to propose change, regular formal opportunities for pupils in the prep school to contribute their views are limited.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 Comprehensive and helpful health and safety and safeguarding policies are effectively implemented, and all arrangements specific to the various contexts of the school, including the EYFS are fully compliant. Staff actively promote the pupils' welfare in activities and lessons, and in questionnaires almost all parents felt that their children are happy at school and feel safe. Child protection training is carried out assiduously at the appropriate level for all teaching and non-teaching staff, who have a strong awareness of safeguarding issues. An excellent relationship with local agencies has been developed to support pupils when necessary. Regular training ensures that all employees are immediately aware of any new initiatives such as the need to prevent extremism.
- 4.17 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards, including in the EYFS. Policies and procedures take account of all on and off site activities and checks on equipment are regularly undertaken. Fire prevention arrangements are thorough and fire drills take place regularly and are recorded and monitored efficiently.
- 4.18 In the EYFS, all staff have a paediatric first aid qualification. Across the school accidents, illnesses and the administration of medication are all carefully recorded and all staff are aware of pupils with special dietary or medical needs. As well as a medical room in the pre-prep, use is made of the school's excellent dedicated medical centre with qualified staff. When required, appropriate arrangements are made for pupils with SEND. In the EYFS, regular attendance is encouraged, and electronic admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored. Rigorous systems are in place to follow up any pupil absences.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.20 Outcomes for boarders are good. Boarders have a good standard of personal development, enjoy their boarding experience, and are confident and self-reliant. They value the chance to spend time with their friends in the boarding house and appreciate the opportunities to become more independent, such as being allowed 'downtown' to shop in Bromsgrove.
- 4.21 Boarders usually enjoy positive and constructive relationships with the house staff and their behaviour is generally of a high standard. They are at ease with one another and enjoy life in the house, with most taking enthusiastic advantage of the range of activities and resources offered during the week and at weekends. Boarders with EAL mix well within the boarding community, do not suffer discrimination and are well supported in their acquisition of language skills. The recommendation from the previous inspection that boarders should be provided with greater access to the news and the world around them has been met with the introduction of a weekly news journal.
- 4.22 Through a house council, suggestion box and in informal ways, most boarders feel that their opinions are valued by the boarding staff and that they can play a part in the development of boarding. Boarders are well prepared for the next stage of life at senior school and they feel that their current experience provides them with the right personal qualities to make the transition a success. Boarders understand the importance of abiding by house rules. However, in interviews, and in their questionnaires, boarders felt that on occasions some collective sanctions imposed were not fair. The inspection judgement concurred with this view.
- 4.23 The quality of provision and care is good in looking after the boarders' individual needs. New boarders are put at ease with a helpful induction programme, which includes the provision of a child-friendly handbook and a boarding buddy. This helps them to settle quickly and comfortably into boarding life. The boarding provision is successful in keeping boarders safe, fit and healthy. Internal systems of communication are excellent, records are kept meticulously and medical staff provide highly efficient care for all the boarders' needs. A helpful leaflet indicates people to whom boarders' can turn, including those outside the school who would also provide support. Health care plans are well formulated and their implementation is followed carefully. The arrangements for sick or injured boarders are of high quality, with modern, comfortable and well-equipped medical facilities supported by qualified staff.
- 4.24 Most boarders take advantage of the wide range of opportunities available to them in the evenings and at weekends. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders were not happy with balance of activities and free time. The inspection found that an extensive programme of events is organised such as trips to local amenities and those further afield like the Harry Potter studios. The evening activities, whilst encouraging the development of different skills and pursuits, also allow for sufficient self-directed time and freedom of choice. However, some boarders choose to spend a significant amount of their free time engaged in individual activities that result in them not benefitting from the social aspects of being part of a boarding community.

- 4.25 Food is plentiful and nutritious, with thoughtful adjustments to meet individual dietary needs. The school provides healthy snacks and drinking water, both of which are readily available in an attractive and well-resourced communal kitchen. Boarders are also permitted to consume significant quantities of their own snacks, sweets, crisps and sugary drinks each evening before bedtime. These snacks do not ensure that boarders have a well-balanced, nutritious diet overall. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of boarders indicated dissatisfaction with the quality of food. Inspectors discussed menus with catering staff, and found that food was of good quality and quantity, with sufficient choice, and the boarders were observed to be enjoying their meals.
- 4.26 Excellent, purpose built, modern boarding accommodation of an outstanding standard provides boarders with ample storage space for their personal effects. Boarders may leave any personal electronic devices and money to be kept safely in the house parents' office although not all boarders chose to do so. As a result, the majority of questionnaire responses from boarders reported that they did not feel that all their belongings were safe and, in interviews, they said that at times people removed personal items from bedrooms without the appropriate permission. Therefore, the school is reviewing the systems for storing boarders' personal possessions. Arrangements for boarders' laundry are highly efficient, and staff take pride in ensuring that boarders look smart and have tidy, well-organised rooms. Sufficient washroom facilities are well-maintained and kept immaculately clean.
- 4.27 Boarders have many opportunities to contact their parents. However, limited space is available for these contacts always to be sufficiently private. Senior boarding staff keep in regular touch with families, responding swiftly and helpfully to any concerns which may arise.
- 4.28 Arrangements for the boarders' welfare, health and safety are excellent, and the school complies fully with the National Minimum Standards for boarding. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and considerable care is taken in the recruitment and checking of the suitability of staff and volunteers. All boarding, academic and support staff are given training in safeguarding, and rigorous health and safety policies and procedures for boarding are in place, overseen and monitored by senior managers. Suitably qualified and experienced members of staff take care of the boarders who have the means to contact a member of staff in the night. Boarders stated that incidents of bullying were rare, but if they did arise, staff would deal them with firmly and fairly.
- 4.29 Boarders have clear access to help-lines should the need arise and are provided with the contact details of the independent listener. Several members of the boarding staff are on duty in the evenings, and gap assistants provide excellent support in looking after the boarders. Risk assessments are thorough and action to be taken should a boarder go missing is clearly established and well known. Fire drills occur regularly in boarding time, and the school plans to increase the frequency of practices when the boarders are asleep.
- 4.30 The quality of leadership and management of the boarding house is good overall through the commitment of all those involved in the care of the boarders and in the efficient running of the boarding house. Although leadership is effective, its understanding of the needs of prep school boarders is not fully developed. The school does not yet have a development plan outlining a vision for the improvement of boarding. Pupils and parents are well informed about boarding systems through the comprehensive information in handbooks and through personal communication

with the boarding staff. However, parents do not receive frequent news about their children, such as the newsletters regularly despatched from the senior school houses. Records are properly kept and information is shared via the school's management information system for the benefit of the boarders. Boarders are enthusiastic about their lives in boarding and are aware that it helps them develop their understanding of themselves and of others. They appreciate that the boarding staff maintain close links with their teachers at school and liaise over their homework.

- 4.31 Regular weekly meetings of the house staff ensure that everyone involved remains up-to-date with pastoral and administrative matters. Staff receive appropriate induction and are offered training opportunities to support their boarding contribution. Governors have strong links with the boarding community through a designated boarding governor who visits houses regularly and has discussions with different groups of boarders.
- 4.32 In response to the questionnaire, parents report that their children enjoy the boarding experience and appreciate the support provided by the staff responsible for their care. Likewise, in meetings and through their questionnaire responses, most boarders expressed considerable satisfaction with their boarding life. The inspection team is in agreement with the views expressed.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body has ensured that the school is extremely successful in achieving its aims. Careful consideration is given to maintaining a team of governors with a good spread of skills to support the school's management to provide an excellent quality of education for the pupils. Governors benefit from appropriate induction and training opportunities. Strong strategic planning and prudent financial management have enabled investment in plentiful resources and high quality staff, as well as for the continuous development of outstanding facilities and accommodation.
- 5.3 The governance arrangements, which include an efficient committee structure, enable governors to have a good understanding of the workings of the school. Governors receive detailed reports from management, and minutes demonstrate that they provide excellent support to management, and challenge appropriately to give the necessary stimulus for future improvement. Governors have strong links with the EYFS provision, with a designated governor who has a good understanding of the learning requirements for children. Other governors attend informal and formal occasions, and members of the education committee observe lessons.
- 5.4 Governors are assiduous in discharging their legal responsibilities for compliance with statutory requirements. All whole-school policies are reviewed annually. A detailed review of the safeguarding policy and its effective implementation is undertaken by the whole governing body each year.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.6 Across the school, the leadership and management are highly effective in ensuring the school achieves its aim to develop 'happy, creative, moral citizens who live motivated, fulfilled lives while enriching the lives of others'. In the EYFS, a welcoming, stimulating learning environment reflects the aim of the setting to give the best possible experience to each individual child. Teachers actively promote equality, diversity and British values. Children's safeguarding, welfare, health and safety is given high priority and ensured through the consistent application of excellent policies and practices.
- 5.7 A clear vision for the continued development of the setting has been achieved by the involvement of all staff in reflective practice. Strong teamwork makes a significant contribution to the quality of children's learning experience and their overall progress and development. Management ensures that staff supervision meetings take place regularly which lead to focused professional development. The setting has made excellent progress since the previous inspection to strengthen formal monitoring systems to enable the whole of the EYFS to work in a more cohesive way. This has been supported by the appointment of new academic leadership to work across the setting. Effective systems to monitor the impact of provision, to share good practice

and to strengthen links between the Nursery and Reception classes are now in place.

- 5.8 Dynamic yet approachable leadership has an excellent understanding of the needs of the school. High expectations for all aspects of school life have ensured that pupils have excellent achievement and outstanding levels of personal development. At almost all levels of the school, a shared ethos helps guide strategy and policy, whilst the whole school executive committee ensures that pupils benefit from a continuous education across the pre-prep, prep and senior schools.
- 5.9 The senior management team has a clear vision for the future direction of the school based on a detailed self-evaluation process. This vision is strongly shared across the whole school community, with a sense of collegiality which is reflected in the way staff work together to help drive the school forward. Since the previous inspection, significant changes to leadership and management have been most successful in helping to promote a culture of democratic ethos of self-evaluation and improvement. Meticulous systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school ensure it provides extremely well for the needs of all pupils. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated where necessary with reference to the three-year development plan. The aims of the school inform thorough and effective planning at almost all levels, which has ensured that pupils are learning in a nurturing environment that actively promotes respect and democracy. Pupils are encouraged to be resilient and articulate members of the school community.
- 5.10 The leadership and management of subjects are excellent. Efficient monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning maintains high standards. Regular lesson observations and work scrutiny enable teachers to share the most effective ways to teach, a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Departmental development plans contribute to whole school development supporting the sense of teamwork. Staff are constantly looking to improve and innovate. This quest is embodied in the *Martlet Award* which is one of the many initiatives introduced to reward the pupil's endeavour and achievement in all areas of school life. Links with the senior school are strong with subject leaders meeting regularly to ensure continuity of education for pupils.
- 5.11 The senior management team is highly successful in recruiting and developing highly motivated staff. All staff are trained in their roles of safeguarding, welfare and health and safety. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. All the appropriate checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors, and the single central register is maintained meticulously. An extensive induction process for new staff and volunteers enables them to settle quickly into the busy school routines. They feel extremely well supported. A well-developed appraisal system ensures that all staff are appraised every eighteen months and their training needs are carefully linked to the school development plan. The school is strongly committed to continuing professional development, including the initiative to offer young staff management training. In all areas of the school, communication is effective and allows all staff to feel like a valued member of the team.
- 5.12 As recommended at the previous inspection, the school development plan, which now includes contributions from subject departments, is regularly reviewed and shows a clear sense of educational priorities.
- 5.13 The school successfully fulfils its aim to build a strong partnership with parents. In their responses to the questionnaire, the majority of parents showed strong support

for the care and education provided by the school. Almost all parents would recommend the school to other parents. The EYFS setting works closely with parents and carers. The daily contact with staff and the information about activities planned to support children's learning are greatly appreciated. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. In Nursery they share online examples of children's achievements and in Reception they complete a phonics scrapbook of activities.

- 5.14 From Year 1, a few parents were not satisfied with the information they received about their children's progress and with their opportunities to be involved in events at school. The inspection judgement is that parents receive detailed information about their children's progress and are given sufficient opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. Close communication with parents is maintained through the informative school website, the Bromsgrove app, home-school diaries and weekly newsletters. The efficient administrative team provide helpful support to parents when they contact the school.
- 5.15 The school maintains a highly constructive relationship with parents. A useful guide, *How we communicate*, is sent to parents annually to help them identify the easiest approach to the school. Senior leaders are easily accessible as the school operates an 'open door policy', and parents' concerns or complaints are given prompt, sensitive attention in line with its published procedures.
- 5.16 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in school life. Home-school diaries ensure beneficial communication between parents and school. Events such as evenings with a curriculum focus provide opportunities for parents to acquire a deeper understanding of their children's learning and development. The school's central data base allows parents to access information easily, as well as allowing the school to ensure parents receive the information relevant to their child. Parents' expertise is used to extend pupils' learning opportunities and parents are invited to attend school events.
- 5.17 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with all the necessary information. They are kept very well informed about their children's work and progress through a combination of formal and informal parents' evenings. The *Martlet Award* system also features in the parents' evening cycle where target sheets are discussed and sent home. Certificates are awarded at the end of a two-year cycle. Informative written reports are published on line twice a year and parents can receive hard copies if they prefer.

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