



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **INTEGRATED INSPECTION ST NEOT'S SCHOOL**

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## St Neot's School

Full Name of School	<b>St Neot's School</b>
DfE Number	<b>850/6019</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY271620</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>307324</b>
Address	<b>St Neot's School St Neot's Road Eversley Hook Hampshire RG27 0PN</b>
Telephone Number	<b>0118 973 2118</b>
Fax Number	<b>0118 973 9949</b>
Email Address	<b>office@stneotsprep.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Deborah Henderson</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Stephen Scott</b>
Age Range	<b>3 Months to 13 Years</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>309</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (167 boys; 142 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 27    5-11: 201 3-5 (EYFS): 42    11-13: 39</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Carol Totman</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys and Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>22 Sep 2015 to 25 Sep 2015</b>

## 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](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.

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 EYFS intermediate inspection was in May 2013 and the previous ISI integrated inspection was in June 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.

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 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 the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Richard Johnson	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Frances Mwale	Team Inspector (Head of Prep, IAPS/GSA school)
Mr Eugene Sharkey	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mr Howard Tuckett	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Miss Patricia Griffin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Neot's School is a day school for boys and girls aged between three months and thirteen years. It was founded in 1888 and moved to its current site in 1894. The school became a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors, in 1955 and became co-educational in 1990.
- 1.2 The school occupies a 70-acre site outside the village of Eversley in Hampshire, centred around a large Victorian house with additional purpose-built classrooms which include specialist teaching areas for science, computing, music and the performing arts. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) occupies its own area, adjacent to the main school buildings.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has reviewed its curriculum, resulting in the introduction of a broader range of curricular subjects for the older pupils. It has also revised its arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching, in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection. There are now additional facilities for teaching information and communication technology (ICT), and a new library. The school has created a new woodland learning centre for an outdoor education programme. A new sports centre, including an artificial playing surface, tennis courts and a swimming pool, is currently under construction. The boarding house closed in July 2015. Senior leadership roles have changed and the current head was appointed in September 2015.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide high standards of teaching and to develop in pupils a lifelong love of learning. It sets out to offer a holistic educational experience, working towards high academic standards whilst providing a breadth of experience in sport, music, art, drama and dance, so that all pupils can reach their true potential.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection, there were 309 pupils on the roll: 167 boys and 142 girls. In the EYFS there were 69 children. Of the 21 pupils who had been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 19 received additional learning support. One pupil had an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupils required support for English as an additional language. Almost all pupils leave at the age of 13, and move to independent senior schools.
- 1.6 The results of standardised tests indicate that the overall ability profile of the school is above the national average, with variations in average ability between cohorts. Pupils mostly come from professional and business families, and reflect the predominately white British heritage found in the local area.
- 1.7 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Reception and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The school refers to its younger Nursery group as Tiny Tuskers and to its older Nursery group as Tuskers.

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

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

- 2.1 The school is successful in meeting its aims, most notably in the provision of a holistic educational experience. Pupils' achievements are good, and those of all ages and abilities, including the EYFS, make good progress. Their extra-curricular achievements are excellent, and the school promotes high standards in sport, music and the arts. Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum, which is broad and well planned. This has been developed since the previous inspection to make highly effective use of the school's outdoor learning environment. The quality of teaching is good, including the EYFS, and teachers are successful in nurturing highly positive attitudes towards learning. A small number of lessons do not provide suitably challenging activities for the most able pupils. In the EYFS, teaching does not make best use of the outside areas to promote high quality learning opportunities.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils of all ages have strong social skills and show a sensitive awareness of those around them. The school provides excellent pastoral care, and is successful in achieving high standards of behaviour. Parents, including those of the EYFS children, speak highly of the support provided. Procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. Safeguarding arrangements are strong, and the school is highly committed to providing a safe environment in which pupils can develop and learn.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is good. Governors provide effective support and challenge for the new leadership team. They have reviewed their committee structure and increased their knowledge of key aspects, including the EYFS, in line with a recommendation of the previous inspection. Due to their infrequent visits during the school day, they have a limited understanding of the school in operation. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear vision for the future and development planning is effective. Leaders provide a highly supportive and stimulating environment for staff. Procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and to evaluate the provision in the EYFS are not sufficiently rigorous. As a result, some teaching does not follow the school's policies, and the recommendation of the previous inspection in this area has only partially been addressed. Assessment data is not fully utilised to monitor the progress of groups of pupils. Links with parents are excellent; the parents of pupils of all ages are highly satisfied with the education provided, and supportive of the school.

**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 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

**(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Strengthen the monitoring of teaching to ensure that the school's teaching and marking policies are followed consistently by all staff.
  2. Use assessment information more effectively to monitor the progress of groups of pupils through the school, and in the planning of lessons to challenge the most able pupils.
  3. Strengthen the monitoring of educational provision in the EYFS, particularly teaching and assessment.
  4. Use the EYFS outside areas more effectively, particularly in Reception, to further promote high quality learning opportunities.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 The school is successful in meeting its aim of allowing pupils to reach their potential across a broad range of areas. Pupils demonstrate good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. The results of pre-inspection questionnaires, completed by both parents and pupils, indicate that almost all feel that pupils make good progress.
- 3.3 Pupils have strong literacy skills and can apply these effectively. They listen well and speak confidently. Their reading levels are high, and they derive pleasure from the literature that they encounter. They have a secure grasp of mathematical concepts and can use these to solve numerical problems. Pupils' ICT skills are good and they make effective use of these in their learning in other subjects. They approach problems in a logical manner, investigate well and have good linguistic skills. The standard of pupils' work in art and their musical development are excellent. Pupils of all ages develop outstanding physical skills and enjoy taking part in sport, either individually or as part of a team.
- 3.4 The extra-curricular achievements of the pupils are excellent. The school has a strong record of success in major sports, and pupils regularly gain places in county and regional teams. Individual pupils have also enjoyed success at national level in athletics, judo, eventing and ice hockey. Many pupils successfully complete the junior section of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, gain certificates in rock climbing and compete in mountain bike challenges. Their results in music examinations are equally strong, and they are involved in high quality music, dance and drama performances. Pupils take part in regional musical theatre productions and the school has gained a 'Gold Standard' national award for the quality of their achievements in these areas.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available from standardised tests it is judged to be above national age-related expectations throughout the school. There are some variations between subjects, as attainment in English has previously been higher than in mathematics; this gap has recently narrowed. Pupils transfer to independent senior schools throughout the country, some of which have highly selective entry requirements. Each year, many receive awards and scholarships, both academic and those that reflect attainment in areas such as sport, art, music and the performing arts. This level of attainment, as judged, means that pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, interviews and a scrutiny of the pupils' written work confirms this judgement.
- 3.6 Progress for those pupils with SEND is good, and sometimes rapid, due to the school's well-structured support programme and the specialist teaching they receive. This can be seen in their improved attainment in core subjects. The most able pupils make progress that is at least good, and sometimes excellent, in relation to their abilities, especially when they are provided with challenging extension tasks.
- 3.7 Pupils have highly positive attitudes towards learning. Their behaviour in lessons is usually excellent, and they show a conscientious attitude towards the tasks that they are set. Their written work is usually well presented and organised. Pupils enjoy a

strong rapport with their teachers and work effectively with each other in pairs, in groups or as a class. They show outstanding teamwork skills in their numerous outdoor learning opportunities.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum is suitable for pupils of all ages, abilities and needs, including any with an EHC plan. It covers the requisite areas of learning and fully supports the school's aim of providing a breadth of experience in sport, music, art, drama and dance. It is successful in preparing pupils for entry to senior school. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that pupils are offered an appropriate range of subjects and extra-curricular opportunities. The curriculum has been reviewed since the previous inspection, which has resulted in additional subjects such as reasoning and discrete drama and religious studies lessons. Outdoor education opportunities have been enhanced substantially and effective links with the academic curriculum make this a strength of the school's provision.
- 3.10 The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching for pupils of all ages in French, sport and music. Additional subjects, such as Spanish, philosophy and classics, are offered to older pupils. Pupils benefit from a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme that covers a suitably wide range of issues, including friendship, bullying, financial awareness and how local government works. Older pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The high importance given to the promotion of British values can be seen in assemblies and lessons across the curriculum. Differing political and religious views are presented in a balanced way: for example, when studying the Crusades, pupils were required to consider the viewpoints of both Christians and Muslims.
- 3.11 Comprehensive curricular planning identifies many links between subjects. For example, a project on the Aztecs incorporated aspects of many other subjects, including mathematics, music and art. The excellent ICT and library provision supports the development of pupils' strong reading skills and encourages their independent learning.
- 3.12 Effective systems identify those pupils requiring support or additional challenge. Pupils with SEND, including any with an EHC plan, benefit from individual support and have educational plans that are discussed with parents and reviewed regularly. The learning support department liaises with teachers so as to make appropriate adjustments and offer support in class, where necessary. Through judicious timetabling the most able pupils are sometimes given the opportunity to work in a higher year group for key subjects. They respond positively to this challenge. The use of ability grouping based upon prior attainment in mathematics, English, science and French enables older pupils to benefit from the curriculum at a level matched to their abilities.
- 3.13 An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities allows pupils to further enhance their learning experiences. These include the junior section of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and mountain biking, together with many sporting and musical activities, such as judo and a ukulele group. Visiting speakers, frequent educational trips, residential courses and participation in many competitions and events all serve to develop the pupils' personal qualities and enhance the curriculum.

- 3.14 Pupils' social awareness is strengthened by excellent links with the local community. They benefit from strong links with a local church, holding joint events. Considerable amounts are raised for local charities, as well as the large amounts of food donated to a food bank. These activities afford the pupils opportunities to develop and demonstrate their social awareness.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching is effective in ensuring that all pupils make good progress and supports the aims of the school. Teachers are successful in fostering highly positive attitudes towards learning and emphasise the importance of both effort and achievement. Almost all pupils and parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that teachers give effective support and provide appropriate levels of work. They particularly appreciate the additional sessions offered to help pupils to catch up on missed work and to support scholarship preparation.
- 3.17 Teachers use a variety of methods to engage and enthuse pupils. Peer observations encourage teachers to reflect on their methods. Some highly effective team teaching takes place, with teachers sharing ideas, skills and strategies. Detailed curricular planning enables useful links to be made across subjects, consolidates subject skills and deepens pupils' understanding. Teachers are careful to promote tolerance and respect, and a balanced coverage of political issues. For example, when discussing the current migration situation, older pupils gained a balanced viewpoint of the key issues.
- 3.18 Teaching and marking policies have been reviewed since the previous inspection, but the recommendation for their consistent implementation has been only partially met. Lesson planning is good overall and usually takes account of individual needs. Pupils with SEND, including any with an EHC plan, are set work that is well matched to their abilities. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support these pupils' learning. In a few lessons observed, planned tasks for the most able pupils did not extend their learning sufficiently well, with challenge provided through the amount of work set rather than through more demanding activities.
- 3.19 In many cases marking provides pupils with informative comments and accurate feedback, and the next steps of their learning are identified. Most teachers provide personal targets and pupils usually respond well to these. Occasionally, marking does not indicate ways for pupils to improve and targets are not followed up and, as a result, evidence of improving work, including spelling, is variable. Comments are used widely to praise and encourage. Effective questioning in lessons probes understanding as well as testing knowledge. Teachers normally make good use of assessment data to identify individual needs and adjust their planning accordingly. In a small number of cases, this was not translated into targeted support for the most able pupils.
- 3.20 Teachers make excellent use of resources. Interactive whiteboards are used extensively and creatively, and pupils use computers to enhance learning in a wide range of subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. Throughout the school, specialist teachers convey a passion for their subjects, for example in promoting a sense of wonder about the solar system in a science lesson. Time management in lessons is good, so that lessons hold pupils' interest, motivating them and ensuring good progress. Extensive use of the grounds for outdoor

learning develops pupils' self-confidence: they are willing to take measured risks and to accept new challenges, and also foster their independence and initiative.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' personal qualities are highly developed, in accordance with the school's aims. The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. They are confident in their relationships with their peers and their teachers. Pupils develop an understanding of and show respect for their own and other faiths. Their spiritual awareness and appreciation for natural beauty are shown in their enthusiastic response to their learning in the school's extensive woodland. In assemblies, pupils consider wider spiritual issues. Senior pupils read out a daily prayer, often of their own composition. Pupils feel that they benefit from times for quiet reflection during their busy school day, developing their self-knowledge and self-esteem. Pupils are emotionally mature and respect the views and beliefs held by other people. They have recently discussed the topic of bereavement, with a specific focus on learning how different cultures view life after death. In these discussions, and similar topics, pupils show their empathy with others.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. The school actively promotes strong moral values, and pupils demonstrate a clear knowledge of right and wrong, respect individual liberty and appreciate living in a community where good conduct is the expected norm. Pupils develop a strong moral viewpoint, supported by the school's effective system of rewards. They are able to explain that the school's behaviour code is based on the civil and criminal law of England. Visits from inspiring guests, such as a former member of Nelson Mandela's personnel, have covered a broad range of moral topics.
- 4.4 The quality of the pupils' social development is excellent. They are courteous and self-confident, and show strong mutual respect. They develop supportive friendships across the gender divide and the age range. This is seen at lunchtimes and in house meetings. Pupils show respectful and caring attitudes towards those with disabilities. They have a strong knowledge of English institutions and public services. Pupils show a clear understanding of democracy, as evidenced by their enthusiastic support for the voting system that allows them to elect school council members. They also elect peer mentors to provide the pupil body with immediate guidance and advice. They discuss social themes in weekly house meetings and PSHEE lessons, and achieve many citizenship awards through whole-school activities. Pupils accept responsibility for other people and contribute to the school, the locality and the wider world by supporting those less fortunate than themselves. Senior pupils take pride in carrying out their roles as prefects and monitors. All pupils are involved in a wide range of fund-raising activities across the school. Equally, pupils undertake small-scale personal charitable endeavours to support issues that interest them specifically.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils display tolerance and respect for other cultures; they show great interest in topics on Islam and Judaism. Their knowledge and understanding are further enhanced by trips to significant cultural sites and exhibitions, and pupils enjoy the many such activities that take place at school, including art, drama and musical performances. By the time they leave the school, pupils have an excellent standard of personal development.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 Throughout the school, outstanding relationships exist between all staff and pupils. These support pupils' excellent personal development and promotes the school's fulfilment of its aims. Pupils value the opportunities provided to develop relationships with different age groups. They feel safe, and say that they are happy to turn to members of staff for support and advice. They are aware of potential dangers online, including cyber-bullying.
- 4.8 Form teachers know their pupils extremely well and provide highly effective support and guidance, working closely alongside school medical staff and senior leaders. Weekly staff meetings are held to share and address any concerns. Strong processes support pupils through their transitions across the school. Questionnaire respondents spoke highly of the care provided for pupils.
- 4.9 Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The school is highly effective in promoting positive behaviour, and pupils are considerate, welcoming and courteous. The school deals constructively with any poor behaviour, taking due account of any related disabilities. A few concerns were raised by parents and pupils in their questionnaire responses over the way in which the school responds to incidents of bullying. Evidence from discussions with pupils and staff, a careful scrutiny of behaviour records and observations indicated that the school responds promptly and effectively on the rare occasions when issues arise. Therefore, inspection evidence does not support this view.
- 4.10 Pupils are aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle. This can be seen in the outstanding health and fitness aspects of physical education (PE) lessons, as well as in the guidance and support pupils receive when they choose healthy food at mealtimes. The school seeks and responds to the views of pupils through the school council. This has influenced lunch menus and also selects which charities pupils support each year.
- 4.11 The school has implemented a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.13 The school promotes welfare, health and safety extremely well in all areas, and promotes a safe environment in which pupils can develop and learn according to its aims. Four senior staff are trained as designated safeguarding officers, and a nominated governor supervises arrangements and reports to the main board. The safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect the most recent guidance, and its implementation is carefully reviewed by the board of governors each year. All staff receive appropriate child protection training at regular intervals, including the potential risks of extremism. Recruitment checks for new staff are carried out according to the most recent guidance and accurately recorded in the central register of appointments. The school has established strong links with local safeguarding agencies.
- 4.14 Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff are excellent; policies cover all activities and are implemented rigorously. Careful measures are

taken to reduce potential hazards. Meticulous records of all aspects of health and safety are maintained, and risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school, including the extensive outdoor facilities, and for external visits. The school has made good provision to enable access for pupils with SEND who have limited mobility.

- 4.15 The arrangements for sick or injured pupils are excellent. The school nursing staff provide high standards of care, and they maintain detailed individual care plans and records of medical conditions, first-aid treatment and any medication required. Pupils are accommodated in the medical room if they become unwell, and parents are informed without delay. Thirty-one staff have current first-aid certificates, including higher level and paediatric training where appropriate, and have a good knowledge of pupils' medical needs. Staff have recently undergone additional training to them to help recognise and meet pupils' mental health needs.
- 4.16 Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governors have a clear and ambitious vision for the school, which is shared with the school's leadership team. They support and challenge leaders, holding them effectively to account, and senior leaders regularly report to the full board and committee meetings. This has enabled governors to provide effective support for leaders during the recent transition process.
- 5.3 Arrangements for the recruitment and induction of new governors have ensured that they now have a broad range of skills relevant to their role, including education, the law, business and finance. A revised committee structure now provides effective support for the school, meeting a recommendation of the previous inspection. Some governors are parents of current pupils, providing an additional insight into the needs and views of the school community.
- 5.4 The governors make regular visits to the school. These arrangements are informal, and include discussions with senior leaders and attendance at formal school functions. However, teaching staff and pupils rarely meet the governors and this limits opportunities for them to gain an extended understanding of the educational experience of the pupils and for them to fulfil their monitoring role fully. Governors recognise the need to address this in the future.
- 5.5 Governors exercise prudent financial management and this has enabled the school to undertake substantial site developments since the previous inspection. They ensure suitable levels of staffing and resources. Governors show an excellent awareness of their legal responsibilities. They monitor health and safety highly effectively, and the annual review of the school's policies and procedures for child protection is thorough.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.7 Leaders are committed to providing a high standard of care for pupils and excellent personal development opportunities, and to developing the school's academic provision to enhance the pupils' achievements. As a result, the school is successful in meeting its aims.
- 5.8 The school development plan is detailed, clearly identifying priority areas and realistic ways that these can be achieved. It represents a clear vision for fulfilling the school's aims and effective self-evaluation of areas for improvement. Since the previous inspection; the curriculum has improved and there have been substantial developments of the school site and its facilities. The new leadership team had already recognised the areas for improvement highlighted through this inspection, and has made plans to address these issues.



- 5.9 The recommendations from the previous inspection have been partially met. The governing body's balance of skills, responsibilities and committee structure now provide good support for the school. Teaching policies have been revised and provide detailed guidance to staff. In a small proportion of lessons, inconsistencies still remain in the application of these, although practice has strengthened recently. Marking does not consistently indicate ways for pupils to improve, and planned activities do not extend the most able pupils. Assessment data is not used effectively to monitor the progress of groups of pupils.
- 5.10 The school has been successful in recruiting well-qualified and experienced teachers who are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils, including safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. All are committed to ensuring high standards of care for pupils and developing excellent relationships. Teachers share their good practice as they observe and review each other's lessons. Heads of department play an effective role in the development of their subject areas. Leaders promote a respect for others and the democratic process through their own personal example and the provision of excellent personal development opportunities for all pupils. They provide a supportive and stimulating environment for staff, engendering an outstanding sense of teamwork.
- 5.11 A formal system of appraisal is in place to foster the development of all staff. This includes observed teaching, where relevant, and leads to the identification of areas for further improvement. However, this process is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all staff follow the school's teaching and marking policies consistently. Members of staff are provided with frequent opportunities to attend training courses, and these are often linked to identified school development priorities.
- 5.12 A comprehensive induction process for new members of staff enables them to adapt to their new roles quickly. Regular meetings and email communication ensure that all staff are kept well informed about school routines and pastoral issues. The dedicated support and administrative staff have a key role in achieving high standards of care. The extensive grounds, buildings and facilities are very well maintained so that they provide a highly attractive and stimulating setting that is valued by all members of the school community and promotes excellent learning opportunities.
- 5.13 The leadership team is highly effective in the discharge of its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. Its members show a strong awareness of recent guidance, including the approach to combat extremism. All necessary checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff and governors to work with children, and the central register is accurately maintained. Procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are excellent, including the arrangements for a major construction project adjacent to the school buildings. Management takes appropriate steps to ensure that pupils with SEND, including any with an EHC plan, can access the school and its curriculum.
- 5.14 Links with parents, guardians and carers are excellent. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school. They feel that the school is well led and managed, and would recommend it to another parent. They particularly appreciate the high standards of behaviour promoted and the responsiveness of the school to any concerns, and feel that their children are safe and well looked after. Most parents feel that they are kept well informed.

- 5.15 The parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school and its policies, and the school has an informative website and prospectus. Regular updates and blogs about school events, weekly newsletters, an enhanced online communication system and the use of social media ensure that parents are kept well informed.
- 5.16 Parents receive regular information on the progress of their children. All pupils are provided with at least two full reports each year, in addition to two parent consultation evenings. These reports are detailed and usually indicate target areas for future development. Effective use is made of daily contact diaries. The parents of all pupils above Year 3 receive weekly reports on their children's academic progress in key subjects, in addition to grades in all subjects three times a term.
- 5.17 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children as the school provides relevant information evenings on such topics as the curriculum, future schools and internet safety. The school hosts numerous coffee mornings in order for parents to meet senior staff. Its highly active parent group, The Friends of St Neot's, organises a wide range of social events throughout the year, supports school functions and welcomes new parents, further strengthening links between school and home.
- 5.18 A scrutiny of records shows that the school responds promptly and sensitively to any concerns, according to its published procedures, and senior staff are readily available to listen and respond to any issues or queries.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 6.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 6.2 As a result of the well-planned curriculum and the outstanding care provided, all children make good progress relative to their individual starting points. All children, including those under two and those with SEND, are well supported in their learning and development and become confident learners. They are well prepared for the next stage of education. The personal development of all the children is outstanding. They are extremely happy and grow in confidence and independence. They feel safe and secure in the setting's nurturing environment. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the safeguarding and welfare arrangements for children. They meet regularly to evaluate how individual children are progressing and to plan next steps in learning. There is clear evidence of a commitment to continuous improvement. Opportunities to evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes are not fully developed because of the limited time available to leaders. The recommendations from previous inspections, appointing a governor with particular interest in the EYFS and embedding of supervision arrangements, have been met. The setting provides all children with firm foundations for future learning.

### **6.(b) Effectiveness of leadership and management**

- 6.3 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.
- 6.4 Governance is supportive and effective, and is based on an appropriate knowledge of the requirements of the early years framework. The leadership team shares an ambitious vision for the setting as a whole. Evaluation of the quality of the provision and outcomes, particularly of teaching and assessment across the whole setting, is not fully developed, because of limited management time.
- 6.5 Leaders have high expectations for what all children, including those with additional needs, can achieve through the provision of interesting educational programmes and outstanding levels of care. The educational programmes provided for the youngest children place strong emphasis on the prime areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, and physical development.
- 6.6 Older Nursery and Reception children are given good opportunities both indoors and in the woodland area to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across all seven areas of learning. This meets statutory requirements, as well as ensuring that the needs and interests of the children are addressed. Staff meet regularly to evaluate the progress of individual children and to monitor their welfare.
- 6.7 The school seeks to ascertain the views of parents about all aspects of the setting in an informal way, and it responds swiftly to any issues raised, making appropriate improvements. The views of the children are also sought. In parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and when talking to them during the inspection, they showed overwhelming support and appreciation for all aspects of the setting and would wholeheartedly recommend the school to other parents.

- 6.8 Policies are updated regularly, and termly supervision meetings, in addition to the annual appraisal cycle, ensure that all staff are well supported in their roles and that training needs are identified and, where possible, implemented. This has a positive impact on all children's learning and development. Staff meetings regularly include an element of professional development appropriate to the setting.
- 6.9 Staff actively promote equality, diversity and the values inherent in British society; children respond very well to the consistency of the setting's approach to desired behaviour and expectations, modelled effectively by all adults. Rigorous safeguarding procedures, including the prevention of extremism, are given high priority at all times. Leaders create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment, which prepares children well for their next stage of education.

### **6.(c) Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

- 6.10 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 6.11 The enthusiasm and motivation of all age groups are a direct result of the high expectations of staff for all children, including those with SEND and the most able. All adults foster a positive culture and a strong commitment to learning. All staff have a thorough knowledge of how young children learn and of the early years framework, and they generally engage them in purposeful activities that satisfy their high levels of curiosity. In a few lessons observed, activities did not challenge and extend learning. Adults model language effectively for babies and toddlers. Nursery children benefit from specialist teaching in PE and dance from the age of two. The woodland area provides Reception children with excellent opportunities for supervised risk taking, problem solving and investigation. An appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities enables most children to make good progress and achieve well for their ages and abilities. Insufficient use is made of the outside areas adjacent to classrooms in providing active, challenging and imaginative learning opportunities, particularly for Reception.
- 6.12 Regular assessments and observations track progress well and inform detailed learning records that show the next steps of learning for individual children. Parents are encouraged to contribute information to ensure that all children are extremely well known and all their needs are met. This continuous monitoring ensures that all children are helped to reach and sometimes exceed their expected levels of development, and are ready to move into their next class in a seamless way.
- 6.13 Staff evaluate their planning daily and make adjustments as necessary to ensure that children are stimulated, their interests are considered and they know how to improve. Staff give meaningful praise to let the children know how well they are doing, and reward them with stickers for improved behaviour or work. Staff and parents work closely together to ensure that relevant support is provided for children needing particular help or encouragement with their learning and development, and relevant strategies are put in place to give further support. External agencies are consulted and become involved when considered necessary.
- 6.14 Parents receive relevant information about the topics to be covered each half term so that they can support learning at home. All written reports are detailed and informative in relation to the progress their children are making and they all also include helpful targets for improvement. The progress check for two year old children is thorough and the three prime areas of learning are reported on, after

which, in discussion with parents, any concerns can be addressed at this early stage.

- 6.15 The setting promotes equality of opportunity and the recognition of diversity in its teaching and learning. Understanding of different cultures is encouraged through the celebration of festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Parents who regularly travel are encouraged to show items from their trips and talk about different places of interest.
- 6.16 Teaching supports children well in their learning and development, and equips them with the skills and capacity to learn effectively and to be ready for the next stage of their education.

#### **6.(d) Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

- 6.17 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding.
- 6.18 Staff create a positive and stimulating environment and value each child's achievements, ensuring excellent attitudes to learning. Children are highly motivated and eager to learn. They are effective learners, listen attentively and express themselves increasingly well. The encouragement of adults ensures that all children grow in self-confidence and become increasingly self-aware in a positive way. Staff encourage older children to take risks, hence promoting an understanding that it is acceptable to make mistakes and to try again. All children enjoy their learning and are excited by the activities provided, as seen when Reception children were making sandwiches for their teddy bears' picnic. They work with increasingly high levels of independence. Staff develop children's imaginations through creative stimuli and by modelling activities, and this was particularly evident when Nursery children were captivated in the imaginary world of a musical bear in their dance lesson. Babies and toddlers display great enjoyment when participating in rhymes and action songs.
- 6.19 There is a culture of mutual trust and respect throughout the setting. Babies and the youngest children are helped to form strong relationships with their key people and all adults. The warm, family atmosphere which pervades the school gives all children a sense of belonging, and they learn to care for and respect each other in a secure environment. Babies and toddlers are happy and contented. Nursery children express themselves confidently and articulately, and Reception children are developing a strong understanding of the world around them and beyond.
- 6.20 All staff foster confidence and respect, so that children work together co-operatively. From a young age, children share, take turns and increasingly organise themselves, and by the end of Reception they are highly independent, manage their own feelings suitably and relate well to others. They are extremely well prepared for the transition to Year 1. Key people promote the standards of behaviour and courtesy expected. Within this culture of exemplary behaviour, which is continually praised, sanctions are rarely used.
- 6.21 While full-time schooling is a requirement for Reception children, younger children may attend on a part-time basis, with some participating in one or two sessions. Attendance is regular at the chosen sessions.
- 6.22 Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, as seen in the woodland learning environment in particular. They are guided to use computers safely and begin to discuss potential online risks. From a young age they are increasingly encouraged

to manage their own personal hygiene, and suitable importance is placed on healthy eating and physical exercise. The children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent and they are well prepared to contribute to wider British society.

### **6.(e) Outcomes for children**

- 6.23 Outcomes for children are good.
- 6.24 All children, including those with additional needs, make good progress from their individual starting points. Effective teaching and early interventions often lead to narrowing gaps between groups of differing abilities. Consistently good standards are achieved because of the interesting educational programmes and the outstanding level of care provided by dedicated staff. This results in most children reaching and some exceeding levels of development typical for their age.
- 6.25 Children of all ages are enthusiastic about their learning and are inquisitive. They are attentive listeners and increasingly express themselves in an articulate way. Babies and toddlers are eager to explore their environment. Nursery children understand one-to-one correspondence when they are counting to ten and beyond, and they are beginning to recognise initial sounds. Reception children work confidently with numbers to 20 and beyond, and they can calculate simple number bonds. They recognise some coins, which they used to buy goods at the class shop. They use their increasing knowledge of phonics to sound out simple words when they are reading and writing. They are all developing the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under two**

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

**Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.**