



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report**

**Ashbridge Independent School**

**March 2022**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Ashbridge Independent School			
<b>DfE number</b>	888/6027			
<b>Early Years registration numbers</b>	Ashbridge Nursery EY286886 Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery EY478907			
<b>Address</b>	Ashbridge Independent School Lindle Lane Hutton Preston Lancashire PR4 4AQ			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 619900			
<b>Email address</b>	admin@ashbridgeschool.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Mehta			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ashbridge School Ltd			
<b>Age range</b>	0 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	526			
	<b>Nursery</b>	408	<b>Juniors (Reception to Year 6)</b>	118
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8 to 11 March 2022			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Ashbridge Independent School is a co-educational day school. Founded in 1995, it moved to its current location in 2001. The school has four nursery sections. Ashbridge Nursery is on its main site, with the others situated elsewhere in the Preston area. Ashbridge Nursery and Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery were included in this inspection. The other nurseries, Fledglings and Maxy Farm, are inspected separately by Ofsted. The school is owned by Ashbridge School Ltd, whose directors are responsible for governance.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, at its main site the school has constructed a pre-school play village and an arts workshop, extended its junior library, installed a low ropes course and created an outdoor park including an area with large boulders for clambering. At the Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery, the school has added an outdoors classroom and a riverside learning area.
- 1.3 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.4 The school aims to lay the essential foundations for a child's future by enabling the achievement of academic success and the nurturing of self-confidence and positive attitudes to life. It seeks to recognise and encourage individual talents and abilities and to promote children's right to learn, be happy, be safe and be themselves.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, living locally and in the surrounding area. The school's own assessment data indicate that pupils' ability is above average compared with those pupils taking similar tests nationally. Across the school and the two nurseries, 33 pupils or children have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and specific learning difficulties, all of whom are supported by their classroom teachers and specialist staff. No pupil or child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 14 children who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and who receive support as needed in this regard. The curriculum is modified for those pupils who are identified as being the most able in the school's population.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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

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

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

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

## Key findings

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

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

### PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

### PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

**2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

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

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

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

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

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

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

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

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



### **3. The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage Ashbridge School Nursery**

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

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 3.2 Leaders and practitioners meticulously plan to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of the children in the setting, including those with SEND and additional needs. Baseline assessment completed when a child enters the setting is reviewed effectively at regular intervals to monitor progress. This helps to ensure that all children make excellent progress relative to their starting points, and become well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.3 The personal and emotional development of the children is excellent, due to the high levels of care that the setting provides. Children consistently demonstrate that they feel safe, secure and happy. Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements, which are fully met. They diligently fulfil their responsibility to protect children in their care. Leaders and managers have excellent knowledge of the EYFS learning requirements. They demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement through detailed, cohesive self- evaluation and a clear vision for the future.

#### **Quality of education**

- 3.4 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 3.5 The innovative curriculum with its strong emphasis on outdoor learning is extremely well balanced. It meets the relevant statutory requirements and the needs and interests of the children, enabling them to have an excellent start to their education. There are many opportunities for cross curricular learning as seen in the outdoor environment and in the atelier area where collaborative projects are undertaken.
- 3.6 Staff have consistently high expectations for the children in their care. They have an excellent understanding of how babies and young children learn and develop. Carefully planned activities, which reflect children's interest and stage of development allow them to explore, discover and be curious. This was observed when younger children worked collaboratively to solve problems when building a structure with wooden planks, crates and tyres. Older children focused on exploring 'lost words' by working together to create '3D' models and shared their thoughts and feelings collectively in a class poetry activity.
- 3.7 Regular assessments are recorded on the child's electronic learning journal and tracked against the expected levels of development for their age. These ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored and that their needs are met effectively. These assessments are shared online with parents who in turn report their child's significant experiences and achievements at home, thereby actively contributing to the evaluation of children's progress.
- 3.8 The extremely well-designed learning environment enables all children to choose from high quality resources and experiences and so consolidate and deepen their knowledge and skills. For example, younger children care for the school's small animals, while older children shop for real plants and produce in the school's own 'village' shops. Younger children are introduced to early mathematical language by measuring how tall they are. Older children recognise numbers and shapes and use mathematics in everyday activities. Staff readily use praise and encouragement and this helpful feedback enables children to gain the skills they need to learn. The stimulating experiences that the children receive provide them with a solid foundation on which their future learning can be built. All children from the earliest age are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## **Behaviour and attitudes**

- 3.9 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 3.10 Children demonstrate a high level of engagement, enabling them to be successful learners. They explore indoors and outdoors, playing with what they know and demonstrating a keen willingness to have a go at new activities. A rich variety of resources encourages and fosters exploration and investigation, enabling children to demonstrate confidence and independence. Children are able to maintain their focus on activities for appropriate amounts of time.
- 3.11 Crawling babies showed high levels of curiosity and focus when exploring sounds they could make on musical instruments. They demonstrate great pride when they achieve something, as seen when a baby learning to walk was encouraged and supported to take a few steps towards a favourite toy and smiled delightedly on achieving this. Children act with initiative, following their own ideas and curiosity, and show high levels of motivation and interest. For example; older children extended a gardening activity by asking if they could paint the flowers they had planted. As they access resources and activities, children have clear ideas about what they want to play with and show high levels of independence in their choices. The calm and purposeful atmosphere is highly conducive to the development of children's focus and concentration.
- 3.12 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show respect for one another. They respond well to gentle reminders and guidance from staff about how to share things and how to play co-operatively. The setting has a highly effective partnership with parents which successfully promotes children's attendance. Suitable procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

## **Personal development**

- 3.13 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 3.14 The consistently positive relationships that children have with adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. Extremely effective care practices support children's emotional security, so that children feel happy and safe. The curriculum promotes the development of children's character and provides opportunities for them to develop confidence, resilience and independence. There are many opportunities for child-initiated activities, supported when necessary by sensitive and knowledgeable staff.
- 3.15 The setting has strong links with parents. In interviews, parents reported that the strong relationships between home and the setting allow them to engage in their child's learning and progress. Parents appreciate the daily feedback they receive and the opportunity to meet regularly with the key persons. They are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care their children receive and of the significant progress their children have made.
- 3.16 Children are encouraged by staff to take risks and do adventurous things with confidence and perseverance, such as scrambling and climbing over boulders and rocks in the outdoor area. The youngest children negotiate the steps and wobbly bridge to access the slide in the indoor soft play area. In the forest, children skilfully use real tools to saw and drill wood. Possible risks associated with any use of technology are explained.
- 3.17 A healthy diet is provided each day and practitioners ensure that food preferences, allergy, dietary and medical needs are catered for appropriately. Children are highly motivated to be physically active both inside and outdoors. The abundance of challenging outdoor resources encourages climbing and balancing to develop physical strength and body confidence. Younger children benefit from continual access to fresh air by sleeping outdoors, under canopies adjacent to the classrooms or in the forest area. Hygiene practices, which are followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of the children are met appropriately. Staff encourage older children to understand the need for, and importance of handwashing before eating and support those unable to do it independently. All staff

give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they meet the requirements for safeguarding, welfare and learning and development.

- 3.18 Thorough hygiene practices, which are carefully followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of each child are appropriately met. Staff remind children to wash their hands before eating and support those who are unable to do so independently. All staff are aware of their responsibilities for the consistent implementation of policies and procedures towards safeguarding, welfare, learning and development. All statutory requirements are fully met and adhered to in a consistent manner. The setting prepares the children for life in modern Britain. Good manners are encouraged, and the staff are excellent role models for children in the way they speak to and think of others. Children take part in charity days and celebrate cultural events. However, children are not always provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of diversity through their play or in discussions, as appropriate resources are not always readily available to them in this regard.

### **Leadership and management**

- 3.19 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 3.20 The strong direction from the leadership team results in an enthusiastic and able team of staff who share an ambitious vision to provide high quality education and exemplary levels of care. They consistently monitor the standards of care and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained. This ensures that all children have excellent learning opportunities, are extremely happy and well cared for. Leaders, managers and staff have high expectations of what all children under two can achieve. Staff are well qualified and are well supported by leaders and managers. They benefit from regular one-to-one meetings and annual appraisals, and are able to discuss their own well-being and development. Staff and children have access throughout the day to a room designed for quiet reflection.
- 3.21 Professional development is strong with training provided for all compulsory requirements. In addition, leaders identify other training needs through evaluation and individual meetings. This results in a positive impact on the care and outcomes for the children. Leaders know the children very well and respond quickly to the needs of all children, including those with SEND and additional needs. The setting has ready access to specialist support, both within the school and from outside agencies.
- 3.22 The setting has strong links with parents. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reveal that parents have an extremely positive view of the setting. Strong oversight of the setting by directors provides high levels of support for the management team. Directors communicate regularly with staff, and visit the setting to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented. They analyse data to ensure that all children are making progress. The setting ensures that safeguarding and health and safety have the highest priority, so that all children are kept safe. Statutory duties are fully met, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010, those linked to safer recruitment, and the duties in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been fully met.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements**

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

### **Recommendation for further improvement**

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

- Enable children to strengthen their awareness of other cultures and diversity through the increased provision and use of appropriate resources.

## Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery

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

- 3.24 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 3.25 The leaders have an excellent understanding of the EYFS framework. They have created a curriculum with a particular emphasis on outdoor learning that offers a wealth of opportunities to ensure that all children become confident, curious, and active learners.
- 3.26 The setting meets the needs of all the children including those with SEND extremely well. Children are very happy and thrive in the caring and supportive setting. Staff ensure children feel secure so that they are able to benefit from all the activities on offer. All children make rapid progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- 3.27 Leaders and staff have a strong understanding of the responsibility for safeguarding so that every child is safe in the setting. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. The highly supportive leadership team works closely with staff to ensure that evaluative practice and a commitment to continual improvement have a positive impact on the quality of the children's learning and development.

### Quality of education

- 3.28 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 3.29 The leaders review the curriculum to ensure it meets the requirements of the EYFS. Regular monitoring of the curriculum and the evaluation of activities ensure that all children are very well provided for. Staff have regular opportunities to share information about each child's progress, particular interests and challenges. They use this information to plan bespoke activities, with an emphasis on learning outdoors.
- 3.30 Staff have a very good understanding of how children learn at this age and know what each child can achieve in relation to their stage of development. Well-planned activities enable all children to explore and become inquisitive and imaginative learners. Younger children were observed using magnifying glasses to examine flowers whilst older children investigated bird and animal tracks on the riverbank. Children are given many opportunities to play with different toys and equipment, promoting independence, creativity and focus. Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and take every opportunity to develop their language and social skills. They encourage children to ask questions about the stories they are reading and to join in with actions and in making sounds. Older children participate in activities in order to develop their understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. Younger children make marks with large chalks, while older children are able to form letters correctly.
- 3.31 Regular assessments of individual children's progress contribute to the staff's knowledge about what each child can do and identify their next stages in their learning. These assessments are shared with parents. Children's achievements at home are celebrated and feed into reviews of children's progress so that nothing is missed. These assessments also identify children who may be falling behind, so that activities can be tailored to support them appropriately and meet their needs. The wide-ranging experiences that children receive prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

### Behaviour and attitudes

- 3.32 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 3.33 Children have very positive attitudes to learning. They are very keen and enthusiastic learners, eager to explore their surroundings and use their imaginations. They maintain their focus on activities well. Babies enjoyed watching bubbles being blown and tried to pop them. They explore the sounds made

by different shakers and smile when they found the one they liked the most. Older children in a home corner kitchen, select what they wanted to cook and make cooker timer noises to indicate when food is ready.

- 3.34 Children develop inquisitive minds, seen as they respond to the world around them. Following an activity looking for wildlife on the riverbank, some of the older children used binoculars to look at what was happening on the river. Staff give appropriate praise to the children for their achievements. This encourages children to repeat their activities, embeds learning and promotes a desire to try new things.
- 3.35 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show great respect for one another, often helping each other to fetch things or joining in applause to celebrate each other's successes. This is very well supported by staff's modelling of kind and supportive behaviour. Staff gently remind children about how to share things, so they learn how to play together. Attendance is monitored well. Children are happy to be greeted by their key person each morning. Procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

### **Personal development**

- 3.36 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 3.37 Highly effective care practices promote and support the children's emotional security and development of their character. Children feel extremely happy and safe in the setting and so can take advantage of everything that is on offer. Committed staff reassure and respond very effectively to each child's needs in a sensitive and caring way. For example, a toddler who was upset on arrival at the setting was comforted and reassured by staff until he felt sufficiently secure to join in with the activities in the room. Parents typically commented to inspectors that they are very pleased with the standard of emotional support given to their child and that they are confident that the setting will look after their child in the very best way.
- 3.38 Staff have an excellent understanding how to support children's development of confidence and independence. Time is given for children to try things for themselves. For example, a toddler was helped to turn on a tap to fill a watering can. This was then repeated several times until he managed it independently. All children, except the very youngest, feed themselves, and those that have a nap can locate their sleeping mats. They know their daily routine well, which demonstrates a growing sense of independence. Older children are encouraged to think for themselves and act independently before asking for help, such as trying to cut shapes out of paper and changing their clothes. Staff encourage children to take risks and to challenge themselves both inside and outdoors, such as when climbing on large boulders or using a slide. These activities are carefully supervised so that children are not put in danger or set a task that is so challenging that they lose confidence. Children's exploration is well supported by the provision of imaginatively constructed outdoor areas, including an old fishing boat set into boulders and high-quality climbing apparatus. This enables children to begin to assess risk for themselves.
- 3.39 Staff know each child very well, particularly through the highly supportive key person system. Children feel confident with the adults in the setting, which leads them to feel safe, happy and secure. This helps to foster their well-being and independence very effectively. Children know that they can seek assurance from their key person at any time. The setting makes excellent provision to encourage children to lead a healthy lifestyle. All children spend much time outdoors. They are encouraged to be as physically active as possible and to take every opportunity to develop their gross motor skills. The youngest children take their daily naps outside to be in the fresh air. Children are provided with nutritionally balanced snacks and lunches and have access to water whenever it is wanted. The setting has a no screen policy but children are introduced to technology through using programmable toys and imitation toys that are digital.

3.40 Children are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Staff help them to share and take turns, to make decisions and to respect and care about others. The recent introduction of a 'Kindness Tree' allows younger children, staff and parents to recognise and acknowledge acts of kindness, which together with British values of fairness and tolerance underpin the setting. The celebration of cultural and religious festivals is evident. However, resources to support and reflect equality and diversity are limited, thus restricting the children's understanding of the wider world.

### **Leadership and management**

3.41 Leadership and management are outstanding.

3.42 Leaders are continually looking for ways to improve the provision to ensure each child is given the best start to their education.

3.43 Highly effective systems are in place for staff's professional development and appraisal, leading to identification of training which benefits both the setting and the individual. Staff appreciate that they can seek support from the leadership team at any time. Leaders are mindful of the workload of staff.

3.44 Relationships between leaders and children, parents and the wider community are very productive. The setting has addressed the recommendation of the previous report. Parents are provided with a wide range of information, both on entry and during the time in the setting about the EYFS curriculum and about initiatives the setting is introducing. Parents spoke of the friendly and approachable staff who know their children very well and of the consistently high standards of care provided. Parents particularly value the conversations they have with staff at the end of the day, when they are informed about what their child has done during the session. They also receive any necessary information via the parents' app. The setting has very good links with outside agencies through the local authority and can access specialist help such as speech therapy if required.

3.45 The directors are fully aware of the requirements of the EYFS and oversee and support the leaders very effectively. They show great interest and knowledge about how children learn at this stage. Leaders fulfil their statutory duties with regard to equality, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements**

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

### **Recommendation for further improvement**

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

- Enable children to strengthen their awareness of other cultures and diversity through the increased provision and use of appropriate resources.

## 4. Educational Quality Inspection

### Preface

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

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school

### Key findings

4.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- A very large majority of pupils make excellent progress in all academic and non-academic areas.
- Pupils' extremely effective communication skills enhance all their learning.
- Pupils give of their best and are ready to take risks in order to find out more.
- Pupils develop a particular enthusiasm for applying their highly competent numeracy skills across all aspects of learning.
- Pupils develop strong knowledge, skills and understanding through the stimulating indoors and outside curriculum.

4.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils' self-understanding is excellent. They know how to improve their own learning and performance in preparation for the next stage of their lives.
- Pupils' show a strong personal responsibility for treating others well and know right from wrong.
- Pupils value each other's achievements and encourage one another when overcoming challenges.
- Pupils make a generous contribution to the life of the school and wider community.
- Pupils know how to maintain their physical and mental health and keep safe, including when online.

### Recommendation

4.3 The school should make the following improvement:

- Enable pupils to extend their already extremely good information and communication technology (ICT) skills to include a wider range of applications and experiences.

### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

4.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

4.5 Pupils from Reception to Year 6 make excellent progress and achieve extremely well because they have a wealth of opportunities to experience success within a comprehensively broad curriculum. Pupils are highly motivated by the daily extension of learning into the school's stimulating outdoor environment. They also take full advantage of the wide range of high quality school clubs which take

place before, during and after the formal school day. They achieve a great deal in these additional activities, enhancing the gains they make in lessons. The proprietor and senior leadership are committed to giving pupils a holistic experience which will enable them to develop academically and non-academically to the fullest extent. In pre-inspection questionnaires, parents, pupils and staff overwhelmingly agreed that the school enables a high standard of all-round achievement. Inspection evidence supports these views.

- 4.6 The school's own nationally standardised assessment data for the year 2019 show that the large majority of pupils in all year groups attain at a higher level academically compared with national averages. Pupils have continued to make excellent progress throughout the COVID-19 pandemic because the school's leaders have ensured that its daily provision has been maintained as closely to normal levels as possible. Pupils' sustained progress has also been assured as a result of the supplementary on-line learning provided.
- 4.7 The very large majority of pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and those who are gifted and talented, make excellent progress. Pupils thrive academically and non-academically because the school's leaders and staff consistently encourage and reward achievement based on their close knowledge of each pupil's learning characteristics. Pupils do well because they receive frequent monitoring, assessment and feedback regarding their progress which they find reassuring and constructive. They also learn to take responsibility for self-evaluation, being encouraged to respond in writing to the feedback they receive. If they require additional support in their learning this is facilitated quickly and so pupils know they will not be allowed to fall behind. Pupils told inspectors that this was very important to them and that teachers are caring and fair at all times. Inspectors judged that the warm professional respect and support shown for pupils by all members of the school team is a fundamentally important factor contributing to pupils' success.
- 4.8 Almost all pupils succeed in entrance examinations to highly competitive senior independent and state schools, gaining the places they are aiming for. These successful outcomes include academic and sporting scholarships. Pupils also succeed extremely well in music, many gaining grades in external examinations which are high for their age. In jujitsu club, pupils' strong progress is recognised in the award of graded belts. All junior pupils passed their basic first aid qualification with St John Ambulance and all Year 6 pupils achieved their level 2 Bikeability awards in 2021. There are also sporting successes. For example, the under 9 athletics team were runners up in the 2019 South Ribble finals. Pupils also do well within the school's own accredited award schemes in areas such as outdoor learning activities and gardening.
- 4.9 A particular strength amongst all pupils is their ability to communicate effectively. Reception children in a forensic science workshop made rapid progress applying language such as 'whirl', 'loop' and 'arch', to fingerprint analysis in a 'who dunnit' crime investigation. During an outdoor forest lesson, Year 1 pupils competently wrote messages to the fairies on a piece of tree bark with an improvised writing tool. Partner discussions in a Year 3 English lesson elicited enlivened and well-considered listening and speaking as pupils sorted the processes involved in mummification. Year 6 pupils articulated their ideas lucidly and sensitively when discussing poetry inspired by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Pupils from Year 4 onwards participate in externally accredited speech and drama programmes, reading aloud when presenting to the examiner, with one half of pupils achieving distinction and the other half honours. Pupils' writing develops strongly over time as seen during scrutiny of their books and computer based work in a range of subjects. It is typically carefully presented, well-reasoned and sufficient in quality and quantity. Senior leaders and staff are excellent role models for effective communication, enthusiastically demonstrating a passion for discussion and debate, engaging with pupils in positive interaction at all times. Pupils show a clear understanding that 'every lesson is an English lesson' and apply their communication skills at every opportunity. Pupils are avid readers, making good use of the thriving library and book club.
- 4.10 Pupils display a love for numeracy and apply their excellent skills to all areas of their learning. Younger pupils quickly build up their knowledge of working with numbers. For example, Reception children



took great delight in competently tallying scores in a game of skittles, commenting accurately, 'Look at the highest score', and 'I've got two more than you!'. In Year 2, pupils used mathematical language effectively regarding multiplication, while those in Year 3 demonstrated a good understanding of bar charts. Similarly, Year 4 pupils displayed secure prior knowledge of fractions and decimals. In Years 5 and 6, pupils consistently refer to a strategy, 'Read, understand, complete, solve, answer, check' (RUCSAC), using it effectively to facilitate their independence in learning. They are not afraid to make mistakes in the first instance and confidently self-correct. Pupils attending business club calculate potential profits. During science, gardening and forest activities pupils apply measurements and calculations to practical activities. Pupils acquire high levels of confidence in numeracy because leaders and staff proactively support them in believing they can develop expertise in using number. They reinforce this through activities such as 'Real life maths days'.

- 4.11 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are excellent. Reception children used speaking skills, mathematical knowledge and their understanding of physical attributes, declaring 'I can move the fastest on my scooter because my legs are the longest'. Younger pupils, focusing on dribbling skills in football, used effective footwork in response to directional language instructions. Older pupils in a gifted and talented physical education club, demonstrated a clear understanding of human biology when measuring the effect of increasing the frequency of standing jumps on their heart rate and respiration. In outdoors geography, pupils studying the characteristics of flowing water created diversions and dams in running streams, displaying an insightful grasp of nature's scientific principles. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across subjects combine extremely effectively, enabling them to tackle new learning experiences and challenges with confidence. They are able to use their learning expertise fully because the school's curriculum provides a wide diversity of opportunities to explore topics in and out of doors, on a campus which is full of interesting features and many possibilities to try things out.
- 4.12 Pupils of all ages quickly develop skills in ICT. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson about letters and sounds, pupils confidently used computers to play an interactive game to reinforce letter patterns and key words. Pupils can log in independently, access the programmes they need and link computers to other devices such as projectors. By Year 6, pupils create their own websites, such as those about internet safety. They are becoming increasingly involved in cutting-edge, innovative digital technology, but have not yet extended their range of exploration in using ICT as fully as they could.
- 4.13 Pupils display consistently positive attitudes to learning. They were observed to be absorbed and engaged in lessons and clubs throughout the inspection, whatever the subject or topic. In a mindfulness class, pupils were totally immersed in the activity, exhibiting commitment to the objective of experiencing personal peace and respect for those around them. Pupils show an established readiness to move from one mode of learning to another such as working individually and independently in one part of a lesson, then swiftly transferring their efforts to a collaborative task. They demonstrate a strong capacity to take risks in their learning, being keener to learn more, than to fear making a mistake. In a Year 5 English lesson, pupils confidently explained, 'We are looking for mistakes, so we can see what to learn next'. The school's leaders give due emphasis to attitude as a core value within the school community and this is clearly having a positive impact. Similarly, pupils benefit from the encouragement and support they receive from their teachers in developing their study skills. Pupils understand that listening to, and building on, each other's views and perceptions constructively means that they can reach fuller and deeper understandings, construct hypotheses together and analyse issues more thoroughly. They know that it is important to pursue sources of evidence in a balanced manner, and conscientiously and, to this end, competently refer to books and internet searches.

## The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 4.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.15 Pupils gain strong confidence during their time at the school. They come to understand that they can safely explore any aspect of school life as fully as they wish. They develop enquiring minds and display a keen curiosity in the world around them. Pupils of all ages take enthusiastic advantage of the experiences offered by the school, including the opportunities created by outdoor learning. They are very often in the open air, donned with wellington boots, finding out about nature in forest school, gardening, or caring for and handling the school's small pets and larger animals. As a result, they learn to respect the environment and to respect themselves as important young custodians of the world around them.
- 4.16 During lessons and clubs, pupils increase their self-esteem, self-discipline and resilience because they discover they can push themselves beyond previous personal levels of achievement and excel in areas they might not have expected. For example, in a cheerleader club, pupils reflected on their choreography, realising they could improve their performance beyond their current standard. Pupils develop this sense of self-improvement extremely well and it becomes an essential characteristic of their learning. When talking with pupils soon to leave the school for secondary education, inspectors found that they had acquired an assured and mature quality of self-determination and sense of responsibility for their own outcomes in life.
- 4.17 Behaviour during lessons and clubs and at other times is excellent. Relationships between pupils are very positive. These findings are supported by observations and scrutiny of the school's records regarding any misbehaviour which show there is very little of either a serious or lesser nature. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. This means that they carefully consider their responsibilities relating to everyday interactions and to more far reaching ethical issues with due regard. They learn to make the right decisions, appreciating the impact their words and actions can have on themselves and others. This is promoted effectively by the school's behaviour policy which emphasise rights and responsibilities. Pupils' decision making is reinforced through the school's current 'you decide' focus.
- 4.18 Pupils consistently demonstrate their care and consideration for each other. In a martial arts club, pairs of pupils exercised due respect for each other, adhering to the protocols of the discipline. They helped one another to develop their techniques while moderating the intensity of their physical interaction to avoid causing any hurt. Pupils develop selflessness, taking as much interest in other's achievement as in their own, and providing mutual encouragement in challenging situations.
- 4.19 Pupils benefit greatly from the proprietors' successful implementation of a desire to provide pupils with an invigorating and happy childhood at school. In particular, they are well prepared for life in their senior schools because care has been taken to ensure they understand the risks and dangers in the wider world. Pupils display a strong knowledge through the personal development programme about safe and unsafe relationships, issues such as consent and the risks associated with substance abuse. They also show a suitable understanding regarding online safety, being clear what to avoid on social media and what to do if an issue arises.
- 4.20 Pupils demonstrate they understand the importance of proactively keeping healthy, mentally and physically. Participation is high in sports activities before lessons start each day, dance clubs are popular and pupils are proud of their self-awareness of personal fitness. They appreciate the need to eat healthily, as seen in the choices they make at lunchtime. In mindfulness lessons, pupils clearly understood the importance of mental health and respect for self. In one session observed, pupils discussed the story character's attitude, commenting, 'He's trying to be like everyone else; he should just be himself, then he would be happier'. The school fully meets its aim, to promote pupils' right to learn, be happy, be safe and be themselves. Parents expressed positive views in this regard in their questionnaire responses.

- 4.21 Pupils readily take on responsibilities towards others within school. Older pupils lead some of the clubs for younger pupils. For example, pupils in charge of a creative session displayed appropriate leadership and care for their group, enabling a positive and cheerful recreational activity. Through roles such as monitors, house and sports captains and membership of the school council, pupils develop a strong sense of responsible leadership. They exercise considerate authority and understand the importance of making personal effort to influence change. Older pupils act as excellent role models and are respected as such by their younger peers. Pupils across the school benefit from a learning environment and ethos that is consistently positive and inclusive because leaders and staff have successfully established a high quality of social collaboration between pupils.
- 4.22 All pupils learn that it is important to take an active role in supporting others. They show their understanding of this through charitable fund raising and engagement in community events such as running stalls at the Christmas market. Pupils develop a strong understanding of broader issues nationally and globally through discussion about current affairs and of the importance of democratic principles for the good of everyone. They gain a genuine insight into the practical implementation of democracy and fundamental British values as a result of citizenship studies which include visits to United Kingdom parliaments in both Westminster and Edinburgh.
- 4.23 Pupils display an excellent openness to the spiritual, philosophical and non-material aspects of life. There were many observed moments during the inspection when pupils were totally immersed in activities, often outdoors, and displaying a complete, reverential engagement with the natural world. Pupils on arrival at school eagerly provided the guinea pigs with breakfast, settling in for a quiet ten-minute cuddle with them, entirely at peace. The youngest pupils talked enthusiastically about their love of nature, 'The big space, fresh air', and were captivated, watching and listening to the sheep. In lessons, pupils demonstrated empathy for others, discussing issues with sensitivity. Older pupils related to the feelings of fear others may have experienced during recent storms and flooding, or in trying to understand the anger BLM protesters displayed on demonstrations. In a mindfulness lesson, pupils showed a calm, respectful attitude throughout, gently exploring and reflecting on their feelings and drawing the experience to a close with a meditation exercise. The school's leaders and team successfully ensure that pupils have time and space to benefit from such activities in the interest of allowing them to develop spiritually and nurture their mental health. In particular, the 'spiritual walkway' has provided focussed attention on the importance of this aspect of school life and pupils enjoy the opportunity to engage with it in order to reflect. Pupils also value the 'rainbow bears' in the library which allow them to explore their own moods and the spirituality of emotions. An observed assembly skilfully enabled pupils to openly express personal feelings without inhibition.
- 4.24 Pupils also enrich their understanding of the non-material aspects of life through their study of different religions and faith systems. They develop a strong sense of the universality of the human experience. At the same time, pupils accrue more information to support their deeper understanding of the need to respect and appreciate other cultures. Within the personal development programme, pupils gain good knowledge regarding the diversity of British society and of individuals. Pupils learn not to stereotype others and to appreciate and sensitively understand gender issues. For instance, they respond thoughtfully and appropriately to questions such as, 'Are all professional footballers men?', 'Are all makeup artists women?', 'Are there any jobs just for females?' In an art activity focusing on meaning and reflection, pupils spontaneously created images and comments such as 'this is a boy and girl and they both have unique things about them regardless of gender'. Similarly, pupils displayed respect for racial differences, showing a genuine interest and regard for peers from different cultures and a positively disposed interest in societal issues about diversity of backgrounds.

## 5. Inspection Evidence

5.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Andrew Farren	Reporting inspector
Mrs Rebecca Robertson	Compliance Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Faith Potter	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Val Holloway	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of nursery and kindergarten, IAPS school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sally Donaldson	Team inspector for early years (Head of kindergarten, IAPS school)
Mrs Moyra Thompson	Team inspector for early years (Head, ISA school)