



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ESSENDENE LODGE SCHOOL**

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Essendene Lodge School

Full Name of School	Essendene Lodge School
DfE Number	936/6528
Address	Essendene Lodge School Essendene Road Caterham Surrey CR3 5PB
Telephone Number	01883 348349
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Email Address	office@essendenelodge.surrey.sch.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Kishwar Ali
Proprietor/Principal	Mrs Shirley Haydock
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	84
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (47 boys; 37 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 23 5-11: 61
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Michelle Staples
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	30 Jun 2014 to 03 Jul 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous Ofsted inspection was in March 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', '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 proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions. 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 Linda Griffith	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mr Chris Manville	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Essendene Lodge School is a proprietorial, co-educational day school located in a residential area of Caterham on the Hill in Surrey. It was established in 1966 by the current proprietor, who is also the principal and undertakes the role of governance, along with responsibility for the financial management of the school. The current headteacher was appointed in 2012.
- 1.2 The school buildings provide classroom space, specialist teaching areas and a multi-purpose hall area. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) area is located adjacent to that of the older pupils, and they share many facilities. The school makes use of local venues for sports provision.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a stimulating education that develops a passion for learning through inspirational teaching in an environment that is nurturing, dynamic and forward thinking. It seeks to achieve this within a community where pupils are self-disciplined and take pride in their achievements and those of their peers, and where parents share in their children's learning.
- 1.4 There are 84 pupils on roll, aged from three to eleven years: 47 boys and 37 girls. In the EYFS there are a total of 23 children, many of whom attend part-time; 18 receive nursery funding. Four pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who receive extra learning support provided by the school. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Eleven pupils require and receive support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.5 The ability profile of the pupils upon entry is slightly below the national average, with a wide spread of abilities represented. Pupils largely come from the local area, and their parents from professional backgrounds. The diversity of the local population is reflected in the range of cultural heritages represented within the school.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims by providing a stimulating educational experience for its pupils within a nurturing environment. The quality of their achievements and learning is excellent and pupils of all ages and abilities, including those in the EYFS, make excellent progress. Pupils have a high level of knowledge and skills, and use these effectively so that they often attain levels that are well above those that are expected for their age. They also achieve success in music and sport, and their standard of drama is outstanding. The school has a strong record in preparing pupils for entry to selective senior schools. Good curricular provision fosters a broad range of skills, supported by specialist teaching in subjects such as music and modern foreign languages for all pupils, including those in the EYFS. The quality of teaching is good, and staff have a clear understanding of the needs of individuals and how these can be met. Recently revised policies have promoted high standards of teaching, and there is considerable evidence that this is already having a positive impact on outcomes, though not yet in all lessons.
- 2.2 The standards of the pupils' personal development and for their pastoral care are excellent in all areas of the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is strong, and outstanding relationships promote a sense of mutual trust and understanding amongst all members of the school community. Responses to the pupil questionnaire indicated that they feel very safe and well cared for. The quality of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is sound. Procedures and policies and their implementation have not always met the latest requirements, although all now do so. Arrangements for the checking and recording of staff appointments have not been carried out with sufficient rigour.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are good. There is a clear vision for the future, and leaders at all levels enjoy very good relationships with other staff, pupils and parents. Parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the education provided for their children. Many new initiatives have been introduced and are included in an effective development plan. These have begun to have a positive impact on the provision for pupils, notably in the roles of curriculum leaders, the tracking of pupils' academic attainment and continuing development of the skills of teachers to ensure the best outcomes. The school has not always been sufficiently rigorous in implementing the latest requirements for safeguarding and health and safety. Links with parents are strong; good communication, ease of contact and a comprehensive reporting system ensure that they are very well informed about the life of the school and their children's progress. The recommendations of the previous inspection have been fully met.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:

- ensure that all necessary recruitment checks are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school and that they are accurately recorded on the centralised register [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a) and 22.(3).(a) to (d), (f) and (g), under Suitability of staff and proprietors, and for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety policies always comply with the latest requirements, and their implementation is monitored in a timely manner to ensure that they are applied correctly and consistently.
2. Ensure that recent developments in planning, teaching and assessment are fully embedded so that related policies are consistently followed by all staff, including those in EYFS.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aim to be a place where children can take pride in their achievements.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities, with most, including those requiring additional support, exceeding the Early Learning Goals by the age of five. Children achieve well in all areas of the curriculum, particularly personal, social and emotional development, and there is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy within the setting. Children's good speaking and listening skills in the Nursery provide a strong foundation for literacy, and they develop good awareness of letters and sounds. In Reception, children form accurate letters in guided writing activities, but have few opportunities for independent writing. Children become active, independent learners who enjoy the opportunities to explore and investigate, following their own ideas, although these opportunities are sometimes limited by an emphasis on adult-initiated activities. In the Nursery, some children are able to count accurately to ten, and older children use mathematical knowledge to estimate how many cups of water will fill different sized bottles.
- 3.4 In Years 1 to 6, pupils demonstrate high levels of skill in literacy, numeracy and modern foreign languages. Pupils are numerate and apply their skills to solve problems and answer numerical questions. They have very effective skills in listening and reading, which they use conscientiously in all classroom activities. Pupils write clearly and are articulate. They enjoy opportunities to converse with each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. They use their creative skills appropriately and their understanding of scientific concepts is strong. For example, a pupil in Year 3 could clearly explain the purpose of a fair test and give examples. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good, and they work independently when given the opportunity.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages develop good physical skills and enjoy sport, either individually or as part of a team. Their musical achievements are also good and develop well as they progress through the school. The pupils clearly enjoy singing and benefit from the opportunity to learn a variety of musical instruments. Drama productions and other opportunities to speak in public help pupils to develop excellent oral and performance skills. Confidence, enjoyment and a high standard of performance were evident in a rehearsal for a major school production. The pupils' achievement in a wide range of extra-curricular activities is good.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of seven have been above the national average for maintained primary schools; those in 2013 were well above the national average. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools and were exceptional overall in 2013. Attainment in national tests indicates that the level of pupils' progress is excellent in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. This is also reflected in the school's own tracking of pupils' attainment and progress, with most pupils achieving well beyond the expectation for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This is supported

by additional evidence from lesson observations, the scrutiny of the pupils' work and discussions with them. On leaving the school, many pupils proceed to local independent schools, some of which are highly selective. They have achieved a number of awards, ranging from academic scholarships to those that reflect their potential in other areas, such as drama.

- 3.7 Progress for pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent and they apply themselves diligently; their learning needs are identified and supported effectively. This can be seen in the steady improvement in the scope and structure of their writing. Classroom observations indicate that the most able pupils make progress that is at least good in relation to their abilities. This is particularly evident in lessons where they are given tasks in which they can demonstrate their imaginative and creative talents, although these are not provided consistently across all curriculum areas. The school has already taken steps to improve the consistency of provision in this area.
- 3.8 Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. This is a significant factor in enabling them to make excellent progress and tackle new subjects with confidence and a determination to succeed. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent. Children in the EYFS clearly share this desire to learn, hurrying in to school each morning and settling quickly to their activities.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 This fully supports the school's aim to provide pupils with an educational experience that stimulates and develops a passion for learning.
- 3.11 The EYFS makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Classrooms are imaginatively decorated to create an attractive, welcoming environment where children feel safe and secure. A good selection of varied resources, both indoors and outside, promotes learning across the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum, delivered through an excellent balance of indoor and outdoor activities. A positive approach to play is exemplified by the covered area, allowing ready access to outdoor learning throughout the year. Imaginative role-play areas allow children to express their own ideas. Active learning is effectively promoted through sand and water, block play and digging areas.
- 3.12 The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 provides pupils with a range of skills, knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability. It is effective in its coverage of the requisite areas of learning. In addition to the National Curriculum subjects, all pupils study French, while German is taught from Year 3 upwards. Good use is made of the specialist teaching skills amongst staff.
- 3.13 Long-term planning of the curriculum has recently been reviewed to ensure effective continuity of learning as pupils move through the school. This has led to the introduction of themed weeks to increase the profile of key subjects, such as the recent Maths Week. In the recently introduced personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, pupils are actively encouraged to consider current affairs, social issues, their future role in the world and the impact their actions may have upon it.
- 3.14 The provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is good. It is effective in meeting their needs and conscientiously delivered by dedicated learning support staff. Detailed

education plans provide clear targets, and these are reviewed regularly with the relevant staff to ensure that they are implemented and continue to be appropriate to pupils' needs. Pupils identified by the school as more able receive good provision, although this is less formally structured than that for pupils with SEND.

- 3.15 Pupils value the excellent range of extra-curricular activities and participate with enthusiasm; the curriculum is enhanced by suitable opportunities in sport, music and drama. A balanced range of sports, musical, artistic and creative clubs is available. Activities are suitable for all ages and range from cricket and chess to art and cookery. School musical productions take place regularly, and give all pupils the opportunity to perform in public. They regularly take part in a variety of local festivals. Teams also compete in sports tournaments and play fixtures against local schools.
- 3.16 Educational outings include regular trips to a wide variety of places of both educational and cultural interest which support pupils' learning well. Recent visits have included the Science Museum, local castles and other historic sites. A residential trip to an outdoor activity centre in Kent allows older pupils to develop their self-confidence and good teamwork skills. The pupils benefit from good links with the community, both locally and internationally. They regularly participate and compete in local carnivals and festivals, and the school has established a strong connection with a school in Malawi.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of the teaching is good.
- 3.18 Teaching in the EYFS is effective in supporting children's learning. Staff show a good understanding of how children learn and use this well to provide an appropriate range of activities that meet their needs. Regular observations provide a good snapshot of children's learning in the EYFS, which is recorded in detailed learning journals. Parents have some opportunities to contribute to this process. In a small number of cases, assessment information is not used effectively to guide planning.
- 3.19 Teaching in Years 1 to 6 shows a commitment to meeting the pupils' needs through thorough planning, and draws upon a suitably wide range of activities and approaches to learning. Where appropriate, the teaching sessions often incorporate opportunities for independent learning through internet research and reference books selected from the well-stocked and newly refurbished school library. The integrated use of ICT is being further developed as a teaching tool and in some lessons ably supports the teaching with interactive programs and use of external video clips. Lessons make good use of time, maintaining the pupils' interest. Open-ended questioning ensures that pupils think carefully about their work and that they apply the skills they have already acquired to new and demanding tasks.
- 3.20 Teachers have strong relationships with the pupils; and teaching is characterised by warm and encouraging approach. The staff are mutually supportive and share good practice, supported by regular training. Teaching is based on secure subject knowledge. Subject focus weeks, organised in paired classes of older and younger pupils, are successful in promoting good learning opportunities.
- 3.21 Teaching is effective in catering for the needs and abilities of all pupils. Staff have a good awareness of the strengths of individuals, and suitable strategies are used to ensure that classroom tasks are well matched to these. This is particularly notable in the case of pupils with SEND. Recent staff training has helped to ensure that this

provision is also developing for the most able pupils. Mixed ability classes benefit from a flexible approach to teaching strategies, and also enable the pupils to learn from each another.

- 3.22 In most cases, assessment is used well to promote learning. The marking and recording of formal assessments are exceptionally thorough, and are used constructively to track the pupils' attainment and to inform future targets. The monitoring of pupils' progress is similarly rigorous. Staff often provide oral feedback to pupils on their work during lessons. Challenging target sheets are often used in mathematics and literacy. Teaching sometimes incorporates opportunities for peer assessment, which are enjoyed by the pupils. Most marking adheres to the school's very detailed marking policy. Occasionally, it is cursory and does not include clear goals to help the pupils improve the standard of their work.

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 personal development of the pupils strongly supports the school's aims for them to acquire self-discipline, take pride in the achievements of their peers and become confident members of a strong, cohesive community.
- 4.3 Children in the EYFS respond well to expectations; they sit quietly, listen attentively and are generally very well behaved. They are considerate and polite, playing happily together, sharing resources and building on each other's ideas. For example, during an art activity in the Nursery, two children worked co-operatively to make a junk modelling pirate ship. Children are well prepared for transitions. 'Stay and Play' sessions provide a gentle introduction before children join the school, while transition mornings and activities shared with older pupils prepare children for moving classes within and beyond the EYFS.
- 4.4 Pupils' spiritual development is good. They approach the school day confidently and show a strong sense of self-belief in their responses to teachers and other adults, reflecting an emotional maturity. They develop their own spirituality through trips to places of worship and frequent visits from faith leaders. Pupils gain an appreciation of non-material aspects of life through participation in musical activities, art and drama. Assemblies offer time for reflection, and a recent science workshop inspired awe and wonder in the study of constellations.
- 4.5 The moral awareness of pupils is excellent. During their time in the school, they develop strong moral values and a clear sense of right and wrong. In discussion, they show highly developed maturity when considering social issues, expressing that prejudice has no part in their lives. Pupils acknowledge importance in abiding by the school's simple rules. They state with assurance that bullying is wrong and not tolerated within their school, and that unkind actions have consequences.
- 4.6 Pupils work well together, and so their social development is excellent. From the time they join the school they perform duties appropriate to their age; from the youngest age pupils are representatives on the school council. Members of Year 6 take their posts of responsibility seriously in offering friendship and support to younger pupils. Pupils demonstrate contribution to the world beyond school through fund-raising ventures for charitable organisations, developing their social and economic awareness. An understanding of British political institutions is fostered in all pupils through PSHE sessions.
- 4.7 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent, with significant progress made since the previous inspection. Their knowledge and appreciation of other cultures are well developed, and within the school's diverse community pupils understand with sensitivity that others may hold beliefs very different from their own. This empathy is nurtured through participation in school events and celebrations led by pupils and parents, and pupils also develop a very good understanding of Western cultural traditions. Pupils benefit from an excellent programme of visits to places of interest, both locally and during residential trips. They show a strong awareness of how different life is for children on another continent. This understanding is fostered by the link with a school in Malawi, and enhanced by regular electronic communication and exchange visits by teachers.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff provide outstanding support and guidance for pupils, in accordance with the school's aim to establish a nurturing environment. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents particularly commented on the excellent quality of pastoral care, and their appreciation of the high standards of behaviour.
- 4.10 A sensitive 'key person' system operates throughout the EYFS, established through trial sessions and an individualised settling-in process. This forms the basis of close, positive relationships between staff, children and their families, in line with the school's aims. Staff take great care to ensure that every child's needs are met within a warm, caring environment. Parents endorsed the quality of care provided. Staff consistently reinforce positive social skills, good behaviour and personal hygiene routines through their own actions as role models. High expectations for independence promote a positive attitude towards challenging activities, such as hammering nails into blocks of wood. This helps children to understand risk and staying safe.
- 4.11 Relationships throughout the school between staff and pupils are outstanding. Staff promote excellent behaviour at all times. Class teachers take their responsibility for the welfare of their pupils very seriously. Pupils are confident that they can turn to any member of staff if they have a concern, and across the full age range said that they feel very happy and safe at school.
- 4.12 Throughout their time at school, pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and take regular exercise. The youngest children understand the importance of exercise and notice the effect it has on their bodies during physical education lessons. They make appropriate choices when selecting from the lunch menu.
- 4.13 Staff and pupils have awareness of how to guard against bullying and the school implements effective policies and procedures in this respect. Pupils have great confidence that staff will resolve any difficulties promptly and effectively. The excellent behaviour across the school is supported by a reward system through which staff recognise pupils' efforts. This includes the use of house points, awarded for good work, special effort and helpful conduct, and culminating in 'Star of the Week' certificates and commendations.
- 4.14 Pupils value the role of the school council for communicating their opinions and suggestions. A very small minority of pupils stated in pre-inspection questionnaire responses that they do not receive a response to these. Inspection evidence supports this view: it is not clear to pupils that their views have been considered because feedback on their ideas is not regularly provided.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to increase educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is sound.
- 4.17 All staff receive child protection training at suitable intervals. Two staff are trained as designated child protection officers, and staff show a strong awareness of good practice in safeguarding pupils. The school has good links to local child protection agencies. However, the safeguarding policy had not met current guidance until very recently, and some other welfare policies required modification during the inspection in order to comply with the most recent regulations. Staff recruitment checks have not always been carried out correctly or in a timely manner, and the central register of staff appointments has not been accurately maintained.
- 4.18 Appropriate policies and risk assessments cover the range of activities that take place on and away from the school site. Visual safety checks are completed in the EYFS with due care on a daily basis, but these are not formally recorded. The necessary steps to minimise the risk from fire and other identified hazards are implemented well. Fire practices and alarm tests are held regularly. Staff and pupils are aware of fire exits and routes, and these are clearly displayed throughout the school. However, there is no systematic process to ensure that potential hazards are identified. The school took prompt action to deal with cases identified during the inspection.
- 4.19 Appropriate provision is made for pupils who are unwell. A number of staff have appropriate paediatric first-aid training, and all staff are well informed about the medical needs of their pupils. Stringent procedures are in place for recording and monitoring first-aid treatment and the administration of medicine. First-aid boxes throughout the school are checked and restocked on a regular basis. When pupils become ill at school they are cared for in a suitable separate area until they can be collected.
- 4.20 Admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained and stored appropriately.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The proprietor is a member of the senior management team, and has a thorough knowledge of the daily management of the school, resulting in well-informed oversight. Strong professional relationships have been established with the senior leaders of the school, as well as with other staff, parents and pupils.
- 5.3 A clear vision for the future of the school is shared with the senior management team, reflecting the school's ethos and a strong commitment to its future success. The proprietor has a thorough understanding of good practice in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and this is complemented by a good knowledge and understanding of the EYFS framework and its application.
- 5.4 This has enabled the school to establish a clear and realistic development programme, underpinned by prudent financial management. Careful investment in staff and resources ensures that the school is provided with adequate means to support the pupils' excellent academic achievement and personal development. A thorough process to appraise the head annually is based upon clear and regularly reviewed objectives.
- 5.5 Governance has carried out the required annual review of safeguarding arrangements, however insufficient care has been taken to ensure that these comply with the most recent requirements for carrying out and recording checks made when appointing staff.

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 Strong leadership at all levels of the school enables pupils to achieve excellent educational success and personal development. This reflects continued improvement in the quality of the education and in the caring and stimulating environment provided for the pupils. The highly committed staff nurture a positive approach to learning in a supportive, friendly community.
- 5.8 The EYFS setting is well led. Clear priorities for continued development have been identified and set out within the whole-school development plan.
- 5.9 A thorough self-evaluation draws upon strong monitoring procedures, including regular work scrutiny, informal visits to classes and team teaching, together with a review of assessment records to ensure that individuals are making sufficiently good progress. The school acknowledges that some inconsistencies remain in the implementation of aspects of planning, teaching, assessment and marking policies.
- 5.10 The senior management team plans carefully and realistically for the future and is effective in setting priorities; the school development plan is a comprehensive document reflecting the school's clear vision for the future. Specific objectives have

been set. These include the monitoring of teaching standards through a thorough appraisal process that supports good practice and identifies areas for development. Continual review of the curriculum is undertaken to ensure that it is aligned with current initiatives and evolves to meet the needs of the pupils and the school. The recent introduction of a new assessment system allows leaders to track pupils' progress very effectively. Regular staff meetings, together with the ease of informal communication throughout a small school, ensure that staff are kept well informed of academic and pastoral issues. This was clearly evident during discussions with staff in all departments of the school.

- 5.11 Some sharing of good practice is evident as staff observe one another's lessons, with a clear focus on specific aspects, such as the use of assessment. Staff development is based upon the outcomes of assessment and members of staff are given opportunities to attend courses to enhance their skills. In addition, specific training sessions have been provided to enhance learning opportunities, such as extending pupils' thinking skills through improved questioning techniques. The recommendation of the previous inspection to develop curriculum leadership roles has been met through the introduction of new heads of department in the main subject areas.
- 5.12 The school is staffed by well-qualified and experienced teachers who are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils, including in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Staff who are new to the school say that their induction and the ongoing support they receive have helped them to adapt quickly to school routines so that they can carry out their roles effectively.
- 5.13 Discharge of the responsibilities of the senior management team for the safeguarding of pupils has lacked consistency. Appropriate checks have not always been made on appointment in a timely manner to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children, and the centralised register of appointments has not been maintained to an adequate standard. Until recently the safeguarding policy did not meet current requirements. The school has responded positively; the policy has been modified, in addition to changes made to other policies during the course of the inspection.
- 5.14 The school has developed very strong links with parents. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school, in particular that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after.
- 5.15 There is excellent communication between parents and the school, through contact in person, homework diaries and regular newsletters, including the fortnightly *Essendene Echo*, which forms the basis of constructive relationships. Within the EYFS, parents are kept informed of their children's learning, and reports provide a clear summary of progress in relation to the Early Learning Goals, together with suggestions for the next steps in children's learning. Class teachers and senior staff are readily available to speak to parents and as a result, any concerns are dealt with promptly. An appropriate complaints policy is in place, but has rarely been needed.
- 5.16 Parents and others have good opportunities to contribute to pupils' education by sharing their experience and expertise through classroom activities. For example, a grandfather talked about toys from his childhood and a mother taught pupils how to write Chinese characters for Chinese New Year. Other parents listen to children read or help with outings. Sports days, drama performances and concerts are very

well attended and many parents joined pupils in a local carnival procession. An active parent teacher association organises a wide range of fund-raising events throughout the year, including a Christmas Fair, cake sales and discos, to buy additional resources such as interactive whiteboards and artificial grass, for the benefit of all pupils.

- 5.17 Information about school policies and other relevant documents are readily available to the parents of current and prospective pupils through the school website, prospectus and new parents' handbook. Open days are held at regular intervals, and the 'Stay and Play' taster sessions are available for parents seeking to enrol their children in the Nursery.
- 5.18 Detailed reports and regular parent consultations provide a clear summary of pupils' achievements and progress, and highlight areas for development. Parents feel that these arrangements are very good and keep them well informed. Early morning care and a variety of after-school clubs provide a very welcome additional service for parents.

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