



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BOWBROOK HOUSE SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Bowbrook House School

Full Name of School	<b>Bowbrook House School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>885/6025</b>		
Address	<b>Bowbrook House School Peopleton Persnore Worcestershire WR10 2EE</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01905 841242</b>		
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Email Address	<b>enquiries@bowbrookhouseschool.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr C D Allen</b>		
Proprietor	<b>Mr C D Allen</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 16</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>212</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (133 boys; 79 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>67</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>10</b>	11-18: <b>135</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs L Holdway</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>18 Jan 2011 to 19 Jan 2011</b>		
	<b>16 Feb 2011 to 18 Feb 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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<sup>st</sup> 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 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, though inspectors will 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.

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

- 1.1 Bowbrook House is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of three and sixteen. It was founded in 1954 as a preparatory school for boys. A Nursery and junior school for boys and girls opened in 1968 and the school became fully co-educational in 1972. The school is situated in and around a Georgian house in a small village near Worcester. Extensive grounds give space for games and sports, and for a woodland learning environment. A recent major building and refurbishment programme has resulted in flexible teaching accommodation, which, in turn, has enabled an extension of the curriculum in the senior school. The present headmaster has been in post since 2004. Bowbrook House School is a limited company and the headmaster is the sole proprietor. There is no formal governing body. An independent panel of previous parents, staff and local dignitaries has been established, and is available for consultation and advice.
- 1.2 The school aims to prepare every pupil with the necessary skills to lead an effective and fulfilling life in a rapidly changing society. It seeks to offer all pupils a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, and to promote their self-confidence, self-discipline and self-respect. It wishes its pupils to develop an understanding for the feelings of others, and to ensure equality of opportunity. The school strives to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment for its pupils in order that they may develop strong spiritual, moral, cultural and social values, and lively, enquiring minds, and achieve their maximum potential in all things.
- 1.3 There are 212 pupils on roll, including 10 in the EYFS, 67 in the junior school and 135 in the senior school. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs and three have English as an additional language. The school has identified 26 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), mostly related to dyslexia; they receive specialist learning support from the school. The school does not set academic tests on entry and its ability range is wide. The ability profile of the school is, overall, in line with the national average.
- 1.4 The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage, with very few from minority ethnic groups. Their families live within a radius of fifteen miles from the school, and mostly have business, professional or farming backgrounds. Almost all pupils remain until the end of Year 11, when they transfer to independent and maintained grammar school sixth forms, sixth-form colleges, colleges of further education or agricultural colleges.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school for the EYFS and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the junior and senior schools and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Junior School***

School	NC name
I1	Year 1
I2	Year 2
J3	Year 3
J4	Year 4
J5	Year 5
J6	Year 6

***Senior School***

School	NC name
M7	Year 7
M8	Year 8
M9	Year 9
S10	Year 10
S11	Year 11

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

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

- 2.1 Pupils of all abilities and needs are successfully educated, from the EYFS onwards, in a nurturing and encouraging environment. In relation to ability, overall achievement is good, and good progress is made over time. A key factor is the good teaching that, with the help of good learning support and a clear focus on learning opportunities for pupils of different abilities, progressively advances pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in a relevant range of subjects and activities. Pupils are enabled to meet both curricular and extra-curricular challenges successfully. Pupils are attentive, involved and enthusiastic learners and, in almost all lessons observed, behaviour in class was very good in the junior school, and exemplary in the senior school.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is outstanding. They know that they are valued as individuals and this is reflected in their excellent relationships across the age groups, their willingness to contribute to the community and to take responsibility, and their strong spiritual, moral, cultural and social values. Their thoughtfulness, courtesy and quiet self-confidence are exceptional for their age. The excellence of pastoral care is clearly a contributory factor to pupils' personal development.
- 2.3 The governance and direction of the school are excellent. The proprietor is totally committed to the aims of the school, particularly the provision of a secure and stimulating family environment where all pupils may successfully achieve their maximum potential. He is highly effective in his oversight of the school and in the fulfilment of his duties and responsibilities, including adherence to regulatory requirements. Recent years have brought rising standards, and growth and improvement in all areas of the school. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school benefits greatly from the enthusiasm, energy and determination of those who provide excellent educational direction. The recommendations from the last inspection have been effectively attended to; careful planning has brought about transformations in the premises and accommodation, and in resources, particularly for information and communication technology (ICT). Middle management has been strengthened significantly, which has improved subject co-ordination and curriculum planning, and thereby teaching, learning and achievement. The response of pupils and parents to their pre-inspection questionnaires was overwhelmingly positive. They feel that the school's emphasis on attitudes, behaviour and relationships provides a secure educational environment that enables academic progress; pupils praise the care and encouragement given to them by their teachers, while parents highly appreciate the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values. A few comments referred to a lack of breadth in subject choices and activities but expressed that this was a factor of the size of the school. The inspection team considered that the school does its best to compensate for any restriction. The support of parents also makes a significant contribution to the caring, family atmosphere of the school, which their children are happy to attend.

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

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

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve further the good quality of the teaching through the dissemination of excellent practice and the extension of the monitoring programme, to include work scrutiny and observation across subjects and stages.
  2. Establish a dialogue with pupils, written where appropriate, in the marking process.
  3. Develop further the good quality of provision in the EYFS by improving the outside learning environment and encouraging children to extend their learning through investigation.



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

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

- 3.1 The overall achievement of the pupils is good. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are successfully educated and the school's aims are amply fulfilled. Relative to the abilities of the pupils, standards are good and all pupils make good progress over time. The pupils benefit greatly from their education, which fully meets the aims of the school; in a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment they gain the self-confidence to achieve their potential in academic subjects and recreational activities.
- 3.2 The pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills reach a good, and at times excellent, standard in most subjects and activities. Pupils are articulate and willing to experiment with new vocabulary. Fluency is evident in written work and most pupils are able to marshal information into a logical order. Worksheets are employed extensively in many subjects, often to good effect, though they are overused in some subjects, restricting opportunities for extended writing. However, some excellent extended writing in English and geography was seen in Year 9 books. A striking example was an essay on character development in Orwell's *Animal Farm*; this showed excellent powers of analysis. Numeracy skills and their application develop steadily. Independent work and logical thought are successfully encouraged in subjects as diverse as mathematics and physical education (PE). Pupils discussed fairness in a probability lesson and applied their ideas and knowledge as they made decisions in small groups, while in PE they analysed their application and understanding of defence techniques in games. Good use is being made of the two new computer suites. Pupils' ICT skills are developing well and were being used to good effect in tackling independent tasks in a history project.
- 3.3 Noteworthy achievements in curricular and extra-curricular activities include academic and sports scholarships to the sixth forms of competitive independent schools, and high levels of success, both team and individual, in sports at regional and national level, such as rowing, swimming, football, rugby, athletics and cricket. Pupils have also enjoyed intellectual and creative successes, such as in art and drama, and, for example, Year 7 team competition in the regional heats of spelling championships, and individual participation in a national Shakespeare recital competition. Both rock and classical music pursuits are enjoyed, including the senior school rock band, which is performing in a local arts festival following a European tour, the prize in an earlier competition. In the junior school, a popular children's author has sent a personal letter of congratulation and encouragement for a story written by a young pupil, inspired by her style.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been similar to the national average for maintained primary schools and have shown steady improvement since 2007. At GCSE level, results have been similar to the national average for maintained secondary schools. In 2010, 60 per cent of pupils achieved five or more GCSE grades A\* to C. The results are in line with pupils' abilities, and indicate that their progress is similar to the norm for pupils of similar abilities. However, they do not reflect the substantial progress made by pupils with learning difficulties as they proceed through the school. Nationally standardised measures of progress, introduced in response to the previous inspection, indicate that progress is good

- 3.5 Pupils are good and enthusiastic learners and, particularly in Years 7 and above, have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to progress to the next level, and this gives them the drive and motivation to improve. In almost all lessons observed, behaviour in class was very good in the junior school, and exemplary in the senior school. Pupils are attentive and settle quickly to work. They have good powers of concentration and work well individually and collaboratively to complete tasks in a timely fashion. A good example of this was in a Year 8 history lesson where, working in pairs, pupils rapidly arranged Tudor and Stuart monarchy cards into a family tree showing the correct chronological order. Participation in class discussion, irrespective of academic ability, is considerable, and fostered by a genuine interest in what fellow pupils have to say and by pupils' good relationships with very supportive teaching staff.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.6 The curriculum is suitably broad, and carefully planned to cover the required areas of learning and meet the needs of individual pupils throughout the school. Transition arrangements between different stages are now good; they have improved due to increased oversight provided by the newly formed structure of curriculum teams and leaders. Recent innovations include the introduction of a woodland learning environment lessons across the junior school, and of a BTEC course in music for Year 9 pupils. A multi-purpose hall and spacious grounds for games fields and courts support the PE curriculum well.
- 3.7 In keeping with its aim of meeting the needs of individual pupils, the school has very good learning support provision, both for pupils who require specialist support and for those with milder difficulties who require support in class. Feedback from pupils and parents is extremely positive about the provision available, and the progress pupils make. Subject teachers are kept well informed of pupils' needs and the special educational needs co-ordinator gives useful advice on how to support those needs in class. Judicious streaming in the senior school allows less able pupils to be taught at an appropriate pace to ensure good progress.
- 3.8 Although there is no specific programme for gifted and talented pupils in the senior school, extension work is incorporated into lessons, and there is an enrichment strategy that allows all pupils to broaden their interests and to respond positively to additional challenge. This strategy encompasses setting high level tasks in class, and encouraging pupils to become involved in challenging projects, such as the debating society. They are also encouraged to assume positions of responsibility such as house or games captains, and to strive for high standards in order to represent the school in regional or national competitions in areas from creative writing to sport.
- 3.9 Provision for ICT has been significantly enhanced since the last inspection, and its use both in classroom teaching and by the pupils for independent research is improving, but its application is not yet consistent across all subjects. Although science resources are adequate, the school is aware that, as numbers in the senior

school increase, the size and availability of the laboratory place constraints on the teaching and learning of practical science.

- 3.10 Personal, social, health, citizenship and careers education (PSHCCE) is well planned and firmly embedded in the curriculum; senior pupils are particularly well prepared for their work experience. Pupils at all stages enjoy PSHCCE lessons and understand the value of these for their personal development, both at school and afterwards.
- 3.11 Extra-curricular provision at the school is good. Pupils consider that they have ample opportunities to develop their particular interests and this view is supported by most parents. The level of participation in sporting activities is particularly noteworthy and the close monitoring of this is an added strength. From Years 5 to 11, 90 per cent of pupils have represented the school in at least one sport.
- 3.12 The school has worked hard to foster a variety of links with the local community and with various local and national charities. The pupils visit a nearby care home. They actively raise funds for a local hospice and a day centre for the homeless. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have also produced posters that have been adopted by the local authority to help promote a recycling initiative. The school also shares its facilities with local schools.
- 3.13 In response to the previous inspection report, the school day has been reorganised to give more time for teaching and other curricular activities.

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

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is good overall; it promotes pupils' progress effectively and supports the aims of the school to develop lively and enquiring minds. On occasions, teaching is exceptional.
- 3.15 Well-organised lesson planning ensures a clear focus on learning opportunities for pupils of different abilities. A careful system of monitoring and tracking ensures that teachers are well informed and thus become familiar with pupils' differing learning needs and styles. They go to considerable lengths to ensure that all pupils identify approaches that work for them as individuals. High expectations of behaviour create a positive learning environment for all. Most lessons, particularly in the senior school, involve a variety of tasks to stimulate interest and independent thought, and sustain concentration. Directed questioning promotes participation, and, in the best lessons observed, pupils were encouraged to justify their responses, thereby demonstrating good levels of understanding.
- 3.16 Marking is generally detailed, constructive and encouraging. Target setting is widespread and directly linked with national assessment criteria; these are clearly understood by pupils in the senior school but less so by younger pupils. Pupils appreciate the constructive nature of the written comments on their work but there was little evidence in workbooks of them responding directly to the comments. Assessment data is extensive for all years and is used to very good effect to monitor and sustain good rates of progress. Underperformance is identified and strategies are quickly put in place to bring pupils back on track.
- 3.17 Resources, particularly those for ICT, have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Although the new ICT suites are not yet used to maximum effect in all subjects, the recommendation of the previous inspection to increase resources has

been well met, with the provision of interactive whiteboards or data projectors in all classrooms, in addition to computers.

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

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

- 4.1 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. It is central to the school's aims of promoting its pupils' self-confidence, self-discipline and self-respect, and giving them an awareness of spiritual, moral, cultural and social values. The pupils feel cared for and valued, and this is reflected in their acceptance of each other regardless of age or ability, and in their enthusiasm for participation in, and contribution to, the school house system. They are very well prepared with skills to lead an effective and fulfilling life in a rapidly changing world.
- 4.2 Pupils develop a strong spiritual awareness through the PSHCCE programme and school assemblies, where those of all ages participate enthusiastically in hymn singing. Each lunch begins and ends with grace. In religious education (RE), pupils learn about both Christianity and other faiths, and the school's links with the village church, Pershore Abbey and Worcester Cathedral are highly valued. Pupils also appreciate the beauty of their surroundings.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent, due, in part, to the positive relationships displayed between pupils across all age groups. Through discussions with pupils, it is very clear that they love the school and feel valued by the teaching staff. In replies to their pre-inspection questionnaire, virtually all parents were happy with the school's promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values. Pupils have an understanding of the feelings of others and a clear sense of right and wrong from an early age; in an infant assembly, they articulated clearly why making the wrong choice would have a negative impact on others.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent and their manners are exemplary. At all ages and across all abilities, pupils are given opportunities to contribute to school life and to accept posts of varying degrees of responsibility. They have a respect for older pupils in positions of responsibility such as the head boy, the head girl and the prefects, and they aspire to hold similar positions as they move through the school. Many pupils are interested and involved in environmental projects, from the conservation of water in Year 4 to an independent investigation into fishing quotas in Year 11.
- 4.5 Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is high; it is successfully raised through the PSHCCE curriculum in Year 9 with a topic on global citizenship, through the English curriculum with short stories from other cultures, by organising French pen-friends and through their international charity work sponsoring two children at school in Malawi. In interviews, pupils expressed an enthusiasm and interest in learning about other cultures through RE lessons. Music, drama and art contribute significantly to the cultural life of the school, and this has been recognised by the school's achievement of a national gold 'Artsmark' award in these subjects.
- 4.6 Since the last inspection, a revision of the PSHCCE scheme of work has enabled pupils to experience a broader range of topics, including citizenship and, in the senior school, careers advice, together with a relevant range of work experience. The school has also introduced the school council, where pupils can air their views and suggestions can be taken to staff.

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

- 4.7 The staff's provision of support and guidance for the pupils is excellent, in accordance with the aims of the school to provide a safe and secure environment. The quality of pastoral care and the "family atmosphere" of the school are considerable strengths that were echoed by parents in their questionnaire replies; virtually all parents are happy with the care and guidance. In the pupils' questionnaire, an overwhelming majority stated that the teachers show concern for them.
- 4.8 Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are outstandingly friendly and supportive. Pupils of differing abilities, including those with LDD, show a maturity beyond their years in their mutual acceptance and understanding of each other. In this, they reflect the excellent role models of the staff. There is a sense of togetherness in the school; senior pupils show a great responsibility for the younger pupils, who in their turn, look up to the older pupils with trust and confidence.
- 4.9 The school has very effective procedures, including a clear reward and sanction system, for promoting good behaviour, and guarding against bullying. Parents believe that the school sets and maintains high standards of behaviour. The small class sizes allow staff to know their pupils well and therefore be able to identify quickly, and deal promptly with, any concerns. Pupils feel that they are free to seek help and guidance from staff and have complete confidence that their teachers would resolve, with tact and understanding, issues of unkindness, bullying or harassment, should they occur, which they very rarely do.
- 4.10 Very effective safeguarding arrangements, which include safe appointment procedures and suitable regard to statutory guidance, are in place, and staff training on child protection is up-to-date. Careful attention is given to measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are comprehensive and effective, and include careful provision for pupils who are ill, injured or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through developing healthy eating habits; for example, they are requested to bring a healthy snack for morning break. Lunch times are eagerly anticipated, and the wholesome meals are much appreciated. There is ample provision for exercise, and much emphasis on its importance, through the games and PE curriculum; many pupils are proud to represent the school in competitive sports competitions.
- 4.12 The admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained, and correctly stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The school benefits from excellent governance and direction. The proprietor, as company director and headmaster, provides extremely effective and constructive oversight of the school, wholly in line with its aims. Fundamental to the ethos of the school is the education of each pupil as an individual in a secure and stimulating family environment where every boy or girl may achieve his or her maximum potential in all things.
- 5.2 Through an effective structure of management committees, the proprietor's responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources are all discharged skilfully and conscientiously. Effective structures have been put in place for the fulfilment of the aims of the school, the efficient application of resources, and secure financial oversight and long-term planning. A measure of the success of governance is the vast improvement in significant aspects of the school since the proprietor's leadership took effect in 2004. Expert advice is taken where necessary, particularly in financial and legal matters. The comprehensive development plan is systematically and successfully addressed through close co-operation with the bursar, senior management, and teaching and estate staff.
- 5.3 In his position as headmaster, the proprietor has an excellent insight into the working of the school, and actively and effectively oversees its rising standards with the aid of senior staff. He is fully involved in providing not only support, but also challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement in all areas of the school. Significant investment has been made with the recent completion of new classroom buildings for both the senior and junior schools; the development and refurbishment of laboratory accommodation is in hand.
- 5.4 The proprietor is highly effective in discharging his responsibilities for safeguarding, safe recruitment, welfare, health and safety and associated training throughout the school, together with those for monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures. He has ensured that the main recommendations from the last report have been successfully attended to. Parents indicated their high level of satisfaction with and faith in the governance of the school in their replies to the questionnaire.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.5 The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school benefits greatly from determined, professional and supportive leadership and management, committed to the fulfilment of its aims and ethos. Pupils leave the school not only extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education but also equipped with values to enable them to lead an effective and fulfilling life in a rapidly changing society. The leadership shows vision and drive, and all those in senior management positions make a tireless commitment to the achievement of the highest possible standards. A significant strength is the pride and loyalty of the entire school community.
- 5.6 At all levels of responsibility, the leadership and management of the school work with a dedication that is evident throughout the whole community. They provide extremely clear educational direction to staff and pupils, as reflected in the good

quality of the pupils' education and the excellent standard of their personal development. They set high standards for themselves in a thorough self-evaluation process, identifying priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. Emphasis is placed on the value of pupils attaining the best academic or vocational education, and achievement is rising.

- 5.7 Leadership and management are guided by the aims of the school in carrying out their responsibilities, particularly those for policy implementation and the safeguarding of pupils. Management at all levels is increasingly successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high quality staff and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all children, and in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The induction procedures for newly qualified staff are excellent. Thorough arrangements are in place for checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers.
- 5.8 The recommendations from the last inspection have been fully and effectively attended to stage by stage. Improvements and refurbishment have brought about transformations in the premises and accommodation. Further infrastructural improvements are also planned, including the imminent substantial enhancement in laboratory facilities for sciences. The working day has been reorganised to make the most efficient use of time for teaching and learning, and a programme of monitoring teaching has been introduced. The junior school enjoys positive direction, and the appointment of curriculum team leaders in the senior school has strengthened not only middle management, but has also significantly improved subject co-ordination and curriculum planning across year groups and stages in the school.

### **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The school maintains a highly constructive and close relationship with parents, who are very supportive of its aims and its commitment to achieving them.
- 5.10 Parents indicated in their answers to their questionnaire that they are very happy with: the direction and management of the school; the education and support provided for their children; the good progress they make as a result; the quality of information from and communication with the school; and the pastoral care and guidance. Parents have very good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children, and are warmly welcomed into the school community.
- 5.11 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school and receive clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress. The school handles the concerns of parents with thoughtfulness and understanding, and follows its published procedures.
- 5.12 Parents' views as expressed in the questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive; a few comments touched upon a perceived lack of breadth in the subject choices and activities but claimed that this is a factor of the size of the school. The inspection team considered that the school does its best to compensate for any restriction in option choices by offering, for example, a Latin club and subjects such as GCSE classical civilisation after school.

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



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

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 6.1 This is a good setting with outstanding features which successfully achieves its aim to provide a wide range of activities within a safe and caring environment. The children enjoy their time in school and make good progress in their learning. Excellent partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies ensure that children's needs are fully met and their protection assured. The EYFS staff recognise the unique qualities of each child and show excellent understanding of how to meet individual needs. Constant self-review ensures that the setting sustains improvement. It sets its own exacting standards of care and provision, and works hard to meet them. Since the last inspection, extensive refurbishment of EYFS facilities has taken place, together with the renewal of all resources.

### **6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 6.2 Highly effective leadership and management ensure that staff are focused on giving all children the support they need to make the best possible progress in their learning and development. All records, policies and procedures necessary for the safe and efficient management of the setting are implemented rigorously. Risk assessments are comprehensive and detailed, and are reviewed regularly. Staff are suitably qualified and well deployed. Their professional development is encouraged through external and internal training. Links with parents are strong. Comments in the parents' questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the setting, and included strong appreciation for the standards achieved and the level of care their children receive. The EYFS reflects a whole-school policy that aims to treat all individuals fairly and with respect. The development plan contains excellent evaluation of the existing provision, clear aims for the future and specific areas for improvement.

### **6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 6.3 The quality of the provision is good. Adults support learning and development very well. They listen carefully to the children and respond with encouragement and praise, building on their responses and steering them towards clearer understanding. The quality of lesson planning is good. It is based on careful assessment of individuals, and emphasis is given to using the children's interests to plan for learning. Teaching effectively balances the promotion of core skills in numeracy and literacy with the development of children as individual learners, able to think and make connections for themselves. The classroom is spacious and well equipped; good use is made of resources. All children gain excellent first-hand experiences of the natural world through exploration of the school grounds during activities in the woodland learning environment. However, the immediate EYFS outdoor areas are underused as learning environments. Children are well supported by their key person, who promotes their welfare at all times and guides them towards self-sufficiency.

## **6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 6.4 Children achieve well, making good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning in relation to their starting points. Some make rapid progress. They learn to communicate fluently, enjoy books, and express their thoughts and feelings with developing confidence. They are confident in working with computer programs and numbers, and actively explore and solve problems. However, Reception children are not consistently encouraged to build on their ideas, especially in their knowledge and understanding of the world, or to extend their learning through investigation. The children engage with adults and each other in an open, friendly and accepting way, and demonstrate kindness and courtesy. Children have an excellent understanding of the importance of exercise and healthy eating, develop good hygiene practice and are able to express a developing awareness of personal safety.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## 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 and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Danice Iles	Reporting Inspector
Mr Steven Boyes	Head of Senior School, ISA school
Mrs Clare-Anne Bruce	Head of Junior School, ISA school
Mr Magnus Cowie	Deputy Headmaster, HMC school
Dr David Livingstone	Headmaster, IAPS school
Miss Louise Savage	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector