



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HOWE GREEN HOUSE**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

## Howe Green House

Full Name of School/College **Howe Green House**  
DfE Number **881/6038**  
EYFS Number **EY286469**  
Registered Charity Number **297106**  
Telephone Number **01279 657706**  
Fax Number **01279 501333**  
Email Address **info@howegreenhouseschool.co.uk**  
Head **Mr Graham R Gorton**  
Chair of Governors **Mr Simon Thorpe**  
Age Range **2 to 11**  
Total Number of Pupils **191**  
Gender of Pupils **Mixed (95 boys; 96 girls;)**  
Numbers by Age 0-2 (EYFS): **30** 5-11: **118**  
3-5 (EYFS): **43**  
Number of Day Pupils Total: **191**  
Head of EYFS Setting **Mrs Beverley McNally**  
EYFS Gender **Mixed**  
Inspection dates **18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011**  
**16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011**

## 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 October 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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The quality of governance	9
(b) The quality of leadership and management	9
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>11</b>
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>13</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Howe Green House School is a coeducational day school for pupils aged from two to eleven. It is set in attractive grounds of approximately fifteen acres on the edge of Hatfield Forest and two and a half miles from the centre of Bishop's Stortford. It was opened in 1987, funded by the founding headmistress, staff, parents and friends as an educational trust and is administered by a board of governors within a Christian community. The house, which contains the administration offices, three classrooms and the music, science and cookery rooms, is a listed building. Pupils are taught in a variety of buildings, one of which, The Lodge, accommodates the Nursery, Kindergarten and Reception classrooms which form the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). An outside classroom facility has been added since the previous inspection.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 191 (95 girls and 96 boys). Of these, 73 formed the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils are drawn mainly from Bishop's Stortford itself and from the surrounding villages. They come almost entirely from business and professional families.
- 1.3 Pupils on entry are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, with the Nursery and Kindergarten classes the main points of entry. Pupils are not given standardised tests on entry but those wishing to be admitted after Year 2 are given an entrance test that focuses on the skills of reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. The school caters for a broad range of ability but overall the inspectors judged the average ability of the pupils to be above the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 20 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly with conditions that cause reading difficulties, such as dyslexia. All have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Very few pupils come from the ethnic minorities and four children come from families that do not have English as a first language. All the children from these families are fluent in English.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide a supportive family environment where children come willingly to learn, and where strong emphasis is placed on both the academic and social development of all pupils. The school aims for parental involvement to be a prominent feature of the school. Pupils are encouraged to become ideal citizens for the twenty-first century as a result of the school's aim to create opportunities, realise the pupils' potential and encourage them to live life to the full.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalent is shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

<b>School</b>	<b>NC Name</b>
Kindergarten	Nursery

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

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

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards, pupils are well educated and achieve very high standards in both their learning and personal development. The school meets its aims well. The pupils' progress is good in relation to their above average ability. Pupils enjoy high levels of success in their activities. Teaching is excellent overall, and is characterised by thorough subject knowledge, knowledge of individual pupils and their needs, and the positive use of praise and encouragement. Assessment is thorough, useful and appropriate to the age of the pupils. The overall success of the pupils is also a result of the excellent curriculum which provides a wide range of subjects, with appropriate time for each. This meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. It is enhanced by an excellent extra-curricular programme, and the pupils' own highly enthusiastic attitudes to learning. The provision for pupils with SEND and for gifted and talented pupils is well managed and effective.
- 2.2 Excellent pastoral care, highly effective welfare arrangements and secure health and safety procedures underpin the outstanding personal development of the pupils. They are confident, articulate and eager to play an active role in their learning. They approach their lessons with enjoyment and enthusiasm. A strength of the school is the older pupils' willingness to take on responsibility, their respect for each other and their care for the younger pupils. They show tolerance and respect for each other's differences and collaborate well when working together. All staff provide excellent guidance and support; pupils comment that there is always someone to talk to. The pupils' interest and awareness of being responsible citizens is developed through their charitable fundraising and links with the local and international communities.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is excellent. The ethos and aims of the school are overseen exceptionally well by the governors and senior leadership team, who provide strong support to ensure the school fulfils its aims. All recommendations from the previous report have been met. Procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning are strong, although subject co-ordinators do not have detailed job descriptions and lack of time to monitor the effect of policies has led to some inconsistency in marking. Links with parents and carers are excellent. Parents are extremely happy with the educational and welfare provision for their children, as indicated by the strong support in the pre-inspection questionnaires, where the majority of responses were positive about all aspects of school life. Inspectors support these views.

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

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

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

### **(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement(s).

1. Ensure a consistency of approach in marking to reflect the best practice.
2. Create detailed job descriptions for subject leaders to include adequate allowance of time for monitoring and administration.
3. Refine the recording of planning across the EYFS to avoid repetition of information.

### **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 quality of the pupils' overall achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is excellent. The school's aim to provide the pupils with opportunities to achieve their academic potential within a family environment is extremely well fulfilled. Pupils develop their understanding, knowledge and skills extremely well in all subject areas and in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.2 From the EYFS upwards the pupils are highly articulate and talk eloquently about a wide range of issues relating to the school and the wider world. Their listening skills are excellent and they interact well with their peers and their teachers taking into account others people's views. Their reading is fluent and their writing is imaginative and expressive. Numeracy skills are well developed and are applied effectively in many curriculum areas, including geography and science. Creative opportunities are built into study in many subject areas which is reflected in the very high quality of work seen around the school. The pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are extremely well developed and used across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to develop good levels of reasoning and they display high levels of curiosity. Their physical skills are also particularly strong because of the good range of sports in which they participate.
- 3.3 Pupils at the age of eleven achieve very well as they leave the school, with all pupils transferring to their first choice of secondary school. Many gain places at schools with high standards of entry, some achieving scholarships for academic achievement and others for music, drama and sport. Pupils achieve very highly in individual and team games, particularly netball, football, tag rugby, basketball, tennis swimming and athletics in which sports the school is often the winner of local and national events. Art work of a particularly high quality is exhibited as part of national competitions for independent schools and some is awarded first place. Pupils are successful at local music festivals and some have been chosen to perform in professional productions. Results in instrumental and ballet examinations are good. This broad range of successes makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of eleven have been good in relation to the national average for pupils in maintained primary schools. This level of attainment, together with the evidence seen during the inspection indicates that pupils make above average progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND are well supported in class and where appropriate receive high quality assistance from specialists such as speech therapists or occupational therapists. Gifted and talented pupils also achieve very well because staff ensure that the tasks they are given in lessons challenge them at their own level of ability allowing them to extend their learning appropriately.
- 3.5 The pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they concentrate well, and show great application, self-organisation and perseverance in lessons. They talk animatedly about the range of extra-curricular activities on offer and enjoy taking part at all levels. Pupils work exceptionally well with their peers and the younger children, and



work with the same interest and determination individually. The presentation of their work is very good, reflecting the effort that goes into presenting their work creatively often using ICT to achieve the final result. Their behaviour is exemplary and they clearly enjoy their learning.

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

- 3.6 The broad and demanding curriculum is excellent and there has been a significant improvement since the previous report. The school offers a generally well balanced curriculum which fulfils its aims and has a positive impact on the pupils' achievement and personal development. It covers all National Curriculum subjects and includes an effective personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and emotional literacy programme, French, outdoor education, and religious education (RE). The challenging curriculum offers opportunities for every pupil. It prepares them extremely well for their senior school entry examinations. Music, drama, art and sport are extremely well provided for. Specialist teaching in some subjects makes a significant contribution to the education of the pupils. The cross-curricular approach pervades many aspects of learning, and is reinforced by the programme of teaching incorporating the outside areas. The school's aim to extend across the traditional subject boundaries in order to raise the pupils' creative awareness is fully met without compromising academic achievements. The curriculum is timetabled effectively, to allow all pupils to benefit from the extensive range of subjects.
- 3.7 The curriculum is planned in great detail throughout the school to ensure continuity of education and progress across the years. The recommendation of the previous inspection report has been addressed and good provision is made for history and geography. All subjects have detailed long, medium and short-term plans, which are modified for the particular needs of the individual pupils. Pupils with SEND receive good support within the classroom to enable them to benefit from the curriculum, and are given work that meets their needs. Enthusiastic teaching assistants help those pupils requiring assistance. Identifying targets for individual pupils ensures that progress is evident and rapid. More able pupils are identified and work with additional challenge is provided through the class teacher and the classroom assistants.
- 3.8 The curriculum is supported by regular theme weeks and days. All the core subjects, as well as French, plan and run a theme week either annually or biennially. There are strong links with the local community through the local church and there have been two very significant overseas links with the school raising money to support the building of schools in Kenya and Tanzania.
- 3.9 A wide range of very popular extra-curricular clubs and experiences is provided, including many based on sport and outward bound activities. There is an active choir and orchestra as well as regular practice sessions for sports teams and a booster club for Year 6 in preparation for senior school entry examinations. Pupils undertake a wide range of trips, such as to a local stately home, the theatre and a professional orchestra, which also sends musicians to visit the school. Pupils have the opportunity to attend residential visits to Norfolk or France on an alternate year basis. There are also a good number of visitors to the school such as the Red Cross and the RNLI. Overall, extra-curricular activities develop both environmental awareness and a sense of real-life challenges for the pupils.

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

- 3.10 Teaching is excellent overall. Well planned and knowledgeable teaching enables pupils to develop their learning skills, fulfilling the school's aim to encourage them to set goals, take risks, make decisions and develop their confidence to change their thinking when necessary. The teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils are strong and effective praise promotes the pupils' enjoyment of the lessons. The new outside classroom is used creatively to provide an extra element to the pupils' experience providing well for different learning styles.
- 3.11 Teaching meets the needs of pupils of all abilities very well, including those with SEND. The requirements of individual education plans are met both in planning and in lessons. The strategies included in these plans and the good level of classroom support ensures that provision matches needs and encourages progress. Gifted and talented pupils make excellent progress, partly supported by the organisational arrangements in class, but also by the intervention of teachers and the rich range of opportunities available to them. Most teaching is reflective, inspiring and imaginative and, as a result, pupils are enthusiastic, responsive and stimulated to do their best. This was demonstrated in a lesson where pupils were working out how to send a fragile item to New Zealand without it breaking in transit. The teacher's guidance for each group resulted in rapid progress and excellent results. The excellent deployment of classroom assistants ensures that pupils are given a consistent and effective level of support at all times within the classroom. In a warm and caring environment they are enabled to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop their skills. They are offered ample opportunities to work independently, and to reflect and contribute openly and confidently when developing and exchanging ideas.
- 3.12 The assessment process is strong and has been strengthened further recently with the introduction of a new system to monitor the pupils' progress which is still being embedded within the school. Results of standardised tests are also used in order to identify more accurately those pupils who may need extra support and those who need further challenge in their learning. Data is collated and analysed regularly to ensure that pupils are making at least good or better progress, and information is passed to staff to allow them to adapt their future planning.
- 3.13 The best marking is thorough and adheres to the policy of combining praise with constructive suggestions for improvement, thereby enabling pupils to know what they have done well and how to improve. However this is not always consistent across the school which can limit the children's awareness of what to do to move forward.
- 3.14 The quality and provision of resources across the school is excellent. Interactive whiteboards support teaching in all classrooms and, in those lessons where they are used effectively, these help to enable stimulating lessons and develop the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. For example in an RE lesson pupils were able to experience a sense of awe as they watched a visual representation of the creation of the world.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, including in the EYFS, and helps the school to meet most successfully the aim of producing valued, fulfilled, confident and emotionally literate children. Pupils are clearly happy and confident within the school environment. Throughout the age range the sense of pride the pupils feel for their school is most tangible.
- 4.2 The spirituality of the pupils is well developed within the Christian community and ethos of the school. From the earliest years they display a sense of their personal worth and that of others and this is shown in the way their behaviour is exemplary in the classroom and elsewhere. Pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation and understanding of aspects of the major non-Christian religions through celebrating festivals and events throughout the year such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. During assemblies pupils share their successes and reflect upon a wide range of topical issues. The excellent creative programme in the school, offering as it does such wide opportunities in music and drama, lifts the pupils' spirits above the temporal. The pupils gain much spiritually from the experience of taking part in and listening to orchestras and choirs and from the attractive school grounds. The pupils are self-confident and have high levels of self-esteem and these qualities are well supported by the many reward systems, such as house credits, stamps and stickers. Working together and encouraging each other make the pupils good team players.
- 4.3 The quality of the pupils' moral development is excellent. From the earliest years pupils are able to distinguish between right and wrong, have consideration for others and make sensible choices. In discussions they exhibit a real sense of justice, demonstrated through their wish to ensure that all children across the world have access to the same opportunities. Pupils' strong commitment to the school's charitable fund raising ensures that they feel that they are contributing to improving the lives of others, demonstrating considerable care and moral responsibility. They understand why they have school rules and can explain how they benefit the community.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is outstanding; they are encouraged to see the school as their community and to recognise the part they play within it. They are confident and out-going and are polite and thoughtful to visitors. Pupils take seriously their fundraising for charities, and they are well aware of the fact that others may be less fortunate than they are. Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility from an early age because of the many opportunities to take on supportive roles. Older pupils look after younger ones in their roles of prefects and within the many posts of responsibility that are available to them. They apply for these positions and young pupils aspire to be given these roles. The head boy and girl are proud of their roles; they choose their own charity for the year and organise events to support it with the help of other senior pupils. Voting in the election of school councillors supports their understanding of the democratic process and a wide range of visitors such as the fire and police service strengthen their understanding of the wider community.
- 4.5 The pupils' understanding of other cultures is excellent. Awareness of other faiths is developed effectively through a strong programme of assemblies and RE lessons and through the pupils' participation in various themed approaches to explore the

values and traditions of other countries. Close links with schools in Africa contribute to pupils' global citizenship and cross-curricular teaching supports this further. Many of the cultural links are developed through art and a wide range of creative interpretations are produced to celebrate festivals from around the world including those from Japan. Visits to museums and art galleries, together with the outstanding programme of music and drama available in the school enrich the pupils' experience.

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

- 4.6 Excellent pastoral care and rigorously implemented arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety helps the school to achieve its aim to provide pupils with the opportunities to achieve their potential within a family environment. The caring and friendly staff create an atmosphere in which their pupils flourish and develop into caring, confident and responsible young people who are excellently prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are well supported by form teachers, the senior management team and feel secure in the knowledge that, if they needed help, there are many people to whom they could successfully turn.
- 4.7 Pupils are well known to all the staff. Class teachers provide strong and sympathetic support and guidance both pastorally and academically. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses and in interviews, pupils praised the help they are given by staff both inside and outside the classrooms. No concerns were raised about bullying and in interview pupils were emphatic that bullying does not exist at the school. They are all confident that if anything untoward does occur it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the anti-bullying policy and the school sanctions and rewards policy and feel that they are fair and work well. A high proportion of parents responding to the parental questionnaire praised the school's high expectations of pupils and the excellent standards of behaviour consequently achieved.
- 4.8 Thorough policies and procedures support the welfare, health and safety of pupils in the EYFS and throughout the school. The safeguarding policy is robust, is in line with requirements and is implemented effectively. The training for inter-agency working for designated officers is up to date and all members of staff receive training every three years.
- 4.9 All necessary measures, including fire drills and staff training, have been taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Risk assessments cover all aspects of school life, and health and safety procedures are thorough at all ages. The school has suitable arrangements for pupils who are unwell and a high proportion of staff are trained in first aid, including a number with specific paediatric first aid relevant to the EYFS. Accidents are properly recorded, as is the administration of medicines. The school has an appropriate plan designed to improve the educational provision for those with disabilities. Attendance and admission registers are properly completed and stored.
- 4.10 Pupils understand the importance of eating a healthy diet and healthy eating is well supported by the good quality of the school food. They understand the need to take regular exercise as part of their weekly timetable.

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

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

- 5.1 Governance is excellent. The governing body administers the school very successfully, supporting its aim to encourage pupils to create opportunities, realise potential and live life to the full. The committee structure and the expertise of individual governors strongly support the educational direction of the school and the pupils' personal development. The chair and committee chairs are in regular contact with senior leaders. A governor with identified focus on the EYFS keeps in close touch with staff and meets the subject leader regularly to discuss their achievements and future plans. Senior managers prepare notes for full board meetings which give very good information about the school's successes and challenges for the future. All governors attend the school for special events, and each summer they are invited to meet for lunch and observe lessons, ensuring they have an excellent overview of the life and work of the school.
- 5.2 Strategic and financial planning are strong, and governors make generous provision for human and material resources. The minutes of board meetings indicate that governors debate all aspects of school life very carefully, and work closely with senior leaders and staff to decide on the strategic development of the school and support its future development with appropriate challenge. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities for welfare, health and safety and child protection extremely well. Governors participate in a wide range of focussed training covering a range of pertinent topics, they monitor regulatory compliance carefully and have a strong awareness of reviewing their own effectiveness on a regular basis.

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

- 5.3 Leadership and management are excellent. The outstanding quality of the pupils' overall achievement and their extremely strong personal development demonstrate that the school successfully fulfils its aim of valuing everyone; children, colleagues and parents for the unique people they are. The headmaster and senior leadership team, supported by a strong, committed group of teaching and non-teaching staff, have a very clear vision for the next steps in the schools' development. This is seen in the clear and well-written school development plan which is used as a working document by all staff and governors through regular reviews and updates.
- 5.4 Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is carried out effectively. Senior managers and subject leaders are involved in lesson observation, work scrutiny and checks on lesson planning, and all subject co-ordinators participate in leading twilight training sessions which results in the sharing of good practice throughout the school. Subject co-ordinators do not have detailed job descriptions and the allocated time for them to undertake these roles is limited. This has resulted, in some cases, in an inconsistent monitoring of some school policies such as marking. Staff are asked to evaluate what they have achieved each term and this ensures that reflective practice supports every pupils needs. An effective appraisal system is in place, and the year's in-service training programme is planned based on the outcome of this, ensuring that teaching and pastoral care are excellent. A strong feature of management is the way in which clear links exist between the appraisal system, the monitoring of teaching and learning, staff professional development and the school development plan.

5.5 All members of staff have been suitably trained for their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Communication between staff, both formal and informal, about academic and pastoral matters is of high quality. Staff and governor recruitment checks before appointment have been meticulously carried out and accurately recorded on a single central register. All necessary policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place and reviewed regularly. The premises and grounds are well maintained providing a safe and stimulating environment in which the pupils thrive. The school runs efficiently due to the care and expertise of all those who work to support the pupils through the administration, catering, and maintenance departments.

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

5.6 Links between the school and parents are excellent and strongly support the achievement and personal development of the pupils. The school has an effective, close and co-operative relationship with parents, in accordance with its aims. The responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire by parents indicated exceptionally strong support for the school, with very high degrees of satisfaction with all aspects of its provision. Parents appreciate all the help and guidance afforded their children and the attitudes and values promoted by the school. No items of concern were raised. Inspectors concur with these views.

5.7 Parents are kept fully informed and value the high quality of communication through regular newsletters, parents' evenings and reports. They are also provided with useful information about the curriculum on a termly basis through the appreciated and well attended coffee afternoons. Informative and helpful annual reports give specific information on the pupils' behaviour and progress and there is an excellent system in place for parents to follow up on report comments within a week.

5.8 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information. An informative website provides easy access to some school policies, developments news and other relevant information. Parents have regular and frequent opportunities to meet staff both informally and formally in order to discuss their children's achievements and progress. The school's clear open-door approach ensures that parents have prompt access to a member of staff.

5.9 Parental involvement in the life and work of the school is central to the ethos of the community. They have many opportunities to be involved through concerts, weekly assemblies and using particular skills to help in class. The thriving Parents' Association provides a very high level of support for the school and is actively involved in events to raise money for a wide range of charities including 'Project Tanzania'.

5.10 The school's complaints procedure is thorough and provides clear stages and timescales for the resolution of concerns. The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures.

**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 The effectiveness of the setting is outstanding. Staff demonstrate exemplary knowledge and understanding of each child's development which enables them to meet their unique needs. This is achieved through the provision of a caring and nurturing environment, both for those under three and for the older children, which promotes high levels of academic and social skills. Clear priority is given to the children's welfare and effective safeguarding procedures are in place. Staff work together in a shared commitment to constant improvement of the setting through reflection and self-evaluation. The provision has met all the requirements of the previous inspection.

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

6.2 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. All policies and procedures including those for safeguarding and inclusion are in place and implemented well. Excellent relationships exist with parents who have a high regard for the setting. Strong links are in place with external partners and staff work closely with the local authority in improving teaching and learning. Staff are appropriately qualified and deployed effectively. The quality of self-evaluation is excellent. The head of EYFS has a clear vision for the setting and works closely with colleagues to refine and improve practice, demonstrated by the on-going evaluation of assessment strategies used across the setting. Staff use the wide range of excellent resources available to them creatively.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding for all children including those under three. A welcoming and stimulating indoor and outdoor environment incorporates all areas of learning and this cross curricular, holistic approach is evident across all age groups. Curriculum planning for both indoor and outdoor learning includes a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. It promotes high levels of active learning and is of an exemplary standard. This scrupulous attention to detail has resulted in a repetition of information being recorded on planning documentation which the head of EYFS has identified. Staff use observation and assessment extremely well to guide practice and to identify next steps in each child's development. Staff promote the health and welfare of children effectively through the routines of the setting. Robust and rigorous risk assessments ensure the provision is suitable and safe.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children are outstanding. Children make substantial progress in the Early Learning Goals from a wide range of starting points and capabilities. They are articulate, active, independent, and enthusiastic learners. They confidently make choices, explore and experiment in an environment which offers the space, time and opportunity to facilitate these skills. Children of all ages engage effectively in conversation with their peers and adults. They are proud of their achievements which are valued by staff. Children in Nursery reinforce mathematical concepts through cross curricular practical activities. Reception children described the properties of shapes in detail. Mark-making activities promoting emergent writing were observed Nursery. Reception children write independently and attempt to spell words correctly through the use of effective phonic strategies. Children of all ages use ICT resources confidently in their learning. A safe and secure environment supports high quality relationships between staff and children. Children show an understanding of how to stay safe. They know the importance of clean hands and are aware of the effect exercise has on the body. They are well behaved, polite and friendly. Their personal and social development is at a high level. Children are well prepared for transfer to year one.

**Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

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

**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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Diane Gardiner

Mrs Margaret Smith

Mr Paul Easterbrook

Mrs Jane Short

Miss Lucy Sumner

Reporting Inspector

Head of Early Years ISA School

Headmaster ISA School

Early Years Lead Inspector

Early Years Team Inspector