



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

PRIOR PARK PREPARATORY SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Prior Park Preparatory School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

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| Full Name of School | Prior Park Preparatory School | | |
| DfE Number | 865/6028 | | |
| Registered Charity Number | 281242 | | |
| Address | Prior Park Preparatory School Manor House Calcutt Street Cricklade Swindon Wiltshire SN6 6BB | | |
| Telephone Number | 01793 750275 | | |
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| Email Address | prepoffice@priorpark.co.uk | | |
| Head | Mr Mark Pearce | | |
| Chair of Governors | Commodore C B York | | |
| Age Range | 3 to 13 | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 219 | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (131 boys; 88 girls) | | |
| Numbers by Age | 0-2 (EYFS): | 0 | 5-11: 131 |
| | 3-5 (EYFS): | 24 | 11-13: 64 |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 179 | Capacity for flexi-boarding: 20 |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | 40 | |
| | Full: | 34 | Weekly: 6 |
| Head of EYFS Setting | Mrs Judith Panter | | |
| EYFS Gender | Mixed | | |
| Inspection dates | 20 Sep 2011 to 21 Sep 2011 | | |
| | 17 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 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 31st 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 boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2009 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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 Prior Park Preparatory School is situated in the small town of Cricklade, Wiltshire. It is a co-educational school based on the Catholic tradition, being the preparatory school of Prior Park College which is situated in Bath. It is governed by Prior Park Educational Trust whose governing body oversees both schools and another junior school in Bath. Each school also has its own governing advisory board. The present headmaster has been in position since January 2011.
- 1.2 The number of pupils on roll is 219 and the age range is three to thirteen. Twenty-four pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils below the age of seven and those in the EYFS have been admitted since September 2009 with the Nursery class opening in September 2010. Purpose-built accommodation has been provided for these pupils. Forty pupils are boarders, the majority of whom board full-time. The school has a broad cultural mix with most pupils living within a radius of fifteen miles of Swindon, though there are a number of overseas boarders and some who have parents in the armed forces. While the pupils display a wide range of abilities, their overall ability is above the national average.
- 1.3 Almost a tenth of pupils are from families for whom English is not the first language and include Cantonese, Spanish, Russian, Nepali and Japanese speakers. At the present time twenty-two pupils receive support for English as an additional language (EAL). Thirty-two pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or learning difficulties (SEND). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The aim of the school is to provide pupils with a well-balanced Catholic Christian education of the highest quality, whilst welcoming those of other faiths, thus enabling them to move on to their senior schools full of confidence and eager for further success.
- 1.4 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 extremely successful in meeting its aims particularly that of nurturing pupils' spiritual maturity within an all round education in an atmosphere of gentle Catholic Christianity. Excellent standards of achievement are evident in much academic work; in creative subjects, performing arts, sports and extra-curricular activities. The pupils' outstanding personal development is strongly supported by the broad and interesting curriculum with its emphasis on outdoor education, and the positive and vibrant boarding community. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL make frequently excellent progress over time which is considerably helped by early emphasis on basic skills in literacy and numeracy which continue to build as pupils move through the school. Younger children receive an outstanding start in the EYFS. The pupils' achievements are supported by good and often outstanding teaching. Pupils say they enjoy their learning and are adamant that their teachers encourage and help them. They are attentive and interested, can reason and think for themselves and can work equally well independently or collaboratively. All pupils participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is well supported by excellent pastoral care, welfare and health and safety arrangements both for day pupils and boarders. The Catholic ethos emphasises care, help and respect for others. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about their school and teachers and feel that they are treated as individuals within a friendly, supportive atmosphere, where they are safe and happy. This was reiterated by boarders as well as day pupils in their interviews and questionnaires. From the EYFS upwards, pupils are highly articulate, confident and enjoy speaking to adults. They happily take part in all aspects of school life, contributing to the whole community as well as their own development. The school's group of well-integrated international pupils, many of whom are part of the excellent boarding facility give an extra dimension to its culture.
- 2.3 Excellent and well-informed governance ensures the school's aims are met. Governance gives strong support to leadership and staff and oversees the work of the school highly effectively. The school has made much significant progress since the previous inspection. Strong new leadership has already put into place excellent initiatives which have improved the efficacy of the school and the learning and development of pupils. Management is good at all levels, with secure policies and procedures, and clear. Subject management is being re-organised and whilst some subjects are expertly led, some have plans which are not yet fully implemented. The school promotes excellent links with parents who responded positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They particularly mentioned the pastoral care, the individual help given by staff and the extra-curricular activities and inspectors agreed with this. The school has successfully addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection particularly that of developing governance which is more focused on the needs of the preparatory school.

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. Share existing best practice in subject management to ensure that continuity and progression of curriculum and learning is applied to all subjects.
2. Develop the use of data to track and monitor the pupils' progress across the whole school.
3. Ensure target setting in the EYFS is fully communicated to children to support their learning and development.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Throughout the school the pupils' overall achievement is excellent. This fulfils the school's aim for all talents to be nurtured so that all pupils can reach their potential and be well prepared to enter the next stage of their education with confidence.
- 3.2 Pupils show a good and often excellent level of knowledge and understanding and are well challenged. They are encouraged to think creatively and benefit from learning through using their thinking skills which enables them to consider and absorb more advanced concepts. Most pupils including those with SEND, have good, and often excellent, literacy and speaking and listening skills and write with imagination. Pupils with EAL quickly gain competence in English which enables them gradually to participate in other subjects. In science and languages these skills are well used. They work logically in mathematics and many have quick mental mathematics recall. Presentation of work is often excellent throughout the school and shows pride and effort. Pupils are taught to take notes to aid their learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to advantage in many subjects, although some pupils feel they are not learning the skills necessary to benefit fully from these lessons. Inspectors felt that although basic skills are well taught, higher level skills do not benefit from sufficiently specialised ICT teaching. Physical development of all pupils is excellent.
- 3.3 The pupils' creative skills, particularly in art and design, are exceptionally high. Collaborative and individual artwork shows skill and imagination. Music and drama are also of a high standard, particularly the singing of the chapel choir which makes an important contribution to the weekly celebration of Mass. Pupils in all years showed their articulate and thoughtful discussion skills in interviews.
- 3.4 The pupils participate enthusiastically in the many extra-curricular activities. Pupils have had significant success in mathematics, science and quiz competitions and in performing arts examinations and festivals as well as a diocesan Bible and prayer reading event. Teams and individual pupils compete successfully at all levels in a range of sports. All pupils have the opportunity to represent their school in teams. Musicians of all abilities perform with enthusiasm and enjoyment in competent groups, including playing the ukulele.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but on the evidence available, including standardised data, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able make frequently excellent progress over time in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability. Pupils are well prepared for entry to secondary schools as shown by the number of awards gained each year. Many pupils enter the senior school at the age of thirteen with the remainder moving to other independent or maintained schools.
- 3.6 The pupils show great enthusiasm for learning. They are eager to respond to questions as well as to ask them, showing their developing enquiring minds. All pupils enjoy and benefit from their experiences in the school conservation area, learn to appreciate nature, and are eager to share their work and play. They contribute to the work of the class individually and in groups, responding well to

encouragement to learn independently, with excellent examples of project work being seen. Some younger pupils have advanced plans for a rocket to take them to a parallel universe. Constructive collaborative working across all levels of ability is clearly evident in the classroom and is a strength across the school. Pupils with SEND and EAL said how much they gained from this type of learning and inspectors agreed with them. In class, pupils generally show good, and frequently excellent, levels of concentration and behaviour.

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

- 3.7 The curriculum is of excellent quality and is suitable for all ages and needs and supports the aim of the school to offer a variety of experiences to all pupils. It includes a wide range of well-planned subjects which enable pupils to extend their skills in literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening. An emphasis on outdoor learning allows pupils to experience how nature and conservation link to other subjects. Together with the excellent range of extra-curricular activities and the opportunities for the boarders at weekends, it makes a highly positive contribution to the quality of the pupils' achievement and personal development. Pupils are well prepared for the challenges of secondary education. In Year 6, 7 and 8, Saturday morning lessons allow subjects to be studied in greater depth. Those who enter Year 3 from the pre-prep settle quickly as they are used to attending chapel, changing for games and moving around the school.
- 3.8 As well as the National Curriculum subjects, the curriculum includes drama, dance and religious education and a variety of sports and languages. French is taught throughout the school and older pupils study Latin where they quickly gain competency. Design and technology is incorporated successfully into art and science. Mathematics and science investigations help make theory more meaningful. A recent, highly successful Green Day included science, art, geography and self-sufficiency. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned and effective. The curriculum offers opportunities for all and ensures that those with SEND and EAL as well as the most able, are challenged according to their different needs. Valuable support for pupils with SEND and EAL is mainly given through one-to-one tuition and support in lessons to meet their different needs, ensuring frequently strong progress. In most subjects the curriculum provides continuity and progression from the EYFS through the pre-prep to the prep. This is not fully in place for all subjects. The school is aware of this and has made plans to improve it.
- 3.9 A wide and varied range of extra-curricular activities including archery, fencing sewing, business enterprise, sports and music, allows all pupils to widen their interests and helps them to develop self-confidence. Music groups include all ages and abilities. All pupils have the opportunity to act, dance and sing in concerts, assemblies and musical theatre productions.
- 3.10 Increasingly successful links with the community include visits to local care homes and churches, civic events, and participation in town activities such as Cricklade in Bloom. Pupils visit the town as part of their geography and history studies. Local police and fire personnel are involved in supporting the PSHE programme. Some pupils have links with local choirs, drama groups and sports clubs. Charities, both local and national, are well supported and encourage pupils to think of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves as well as promoting an outward-looking

ethos. The school helps support an orphanage and school in Kenya. The recent appointment of a head of ethos and community is already strengthening these links.

- 3.11 Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a full programme of visits and speakers. Pre-prep pupils enjoy and learn from visits to historic houses and environmental areas, and learn Indian dance. Residential trips both at home and abroad for those in Year 3 upwards, include field and activity trips and a Year 7 visit to France, as well as cultural and sports tours abroad. All enrich and support the curriculum as well as giving pupils memorable experiences which develop their self-confidence and self-knowledge.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The overall quality of teaching is good and often excellent and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It makes a strong contribution to the pupils' usually excellent progress and the high standards many achieve. It fully supports the aims of the school, particularly that of encouraging pupils to think for themselves beyond the taught curriculum.
- 3.13 Teaching shows high expectations of pupils and encourages self-belief. Pupils realise this and have a confident 'I can' culture. Well-planned teaching enables all to gain a secure foundation in basic skills as well as increasing understanding and knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning when appropriate, and well planned and interesting lessons give them many opportunities to do so. Investigations and topic research often are a feature of such teaching. Well-directed questioning at all ages which leads to informed discussion is frequently part of lessons and pupils listen closely to each other. The best teaching is characterised by a variety of teaching methods such as cross-curricular links. An ambitious art and ICT project resulted in patterns being generated by manipulating computer images of Egyptian heads. In a few lessons where progress was less than excellent, teaching did not allow pupils to discover answers for themselves or the pace was too slow to finish the planned lesson.
- 3.14 The learning support department works as part of the teaching team and this is highly beneficial. Pupils with SEND are taught techniques and skills so they become increasingly independent and they are aware of the value of such help and of the increase in their self-confidence. Younger pupils in the pre-prep are well catered for by the successful phonics scheme and individual help in the classroom. Pupils with EAL receive high-quality specialist teaching as individuals, in small groups and with effective extra support in the classroom.
- 3.15 Both general and specialist teachers are well qualified and show a love of their subject which inspires pupils to achieve a high level of attainment and challenges the most able. Well informed teaching assistants and Gap Year students contribute significantly to the pupils' academic and personal development by giving extra support to individuals or groups of pupils. The library is comfortable and well used. On-site games and swimming facilities allow all pupils to benefit from excellent teaching and coaching.
- 3.16 Constructive formal and informal assessment guides short-term planning with close attention to the needs of the individual. The school is aware that the tracking of individual and year group progress over time is not currently fully developed. Well monitored individual targets are set which enable pupils to improve a particular aspect of their work and together with self and peer assessment, pupils feel these

are very helpful. Standardised and other tests help identify any pupil who may benefit from extra help or challenge. Excellent, regular marking throughout the school shows the pupils ways to improve as well as being encouraging and supportive, and also critical if necessary. Older pupils receive achievement and effort grades with comments half-termly which help them to know how well they are progressing.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. They are happy, motivated and purposeful in line with the school's aims. From the EYFS upwards pupils grow in confidence and emotional intelligence; they care for others and take pride in both their own and others' achievements.
- 4.2 Pupils develop outstanding spiritual awareness centred on worship and music in the school chapel and in assemblies. The Catholic Mass in which all members of the community participate, whether Catholic or of other faiths, is seen as the central focus of the week. The friendly and trusting atmosphere of the school is valued by all and particularly valued by members of the school's international group who also commented on the way they feel included and respected. Their experiences and cultures are welcomed and discussed, giving everyone an insight into the values and beliefs of others and making all pupils feel part of the school. Self-esteem is developed by celebrating all achievements whether for acts of kindness, good work or success in activities outside school. In celebration assemblies, pupils feel special. All become self-aware and learn to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses as well as showing appreciation of the world around them.
- 4.3 The quality of the pupils' moral development is excellent from the EYFS upwards. They know right from wrong and understand the need for high standards of behaviour. New pupils quickly assimilate the values of the school. The PSHE programme encourages older pupils to consider their response to current issues such as drugs, internet safety and social justice and younger ones to realise how their behaviour affects others. The pupils' observation of simple rules based on respect and care for others, underpins their good but natural behaviour throughout the school. They realise that the happiness of others relies on their good manners.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are friendly and courteous. Members of the school council are elected from those in Year 3 upwards and gives opportunities for responsibility to younger pupils as well as older. Leadership training prepares those in Years 7 and 8 for a variety of posts such as school and house captains, prefects and leaders of sports teams. A group of Year 7 and 8 pupils are privileged to be servers at Mass. Younger pupils take turns as monitors, messengers or librarians. Pupils develop a strong awareness of social issues through generous charitable giving. They show a mature understanding of public services and institutions in Britain and are preparing to be responsible outward-looking citizens. In conversations, pupils of all ages show a maturity and self-awareness often beyond their years.
- 4.5 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent. Visits to museums, places of worship and theatres and the imaginative creative curriculum, help pupils appreciate the culture and traditions of their own country. Events such as a visit to a Sikh Gurdwara, celebrating Chinese New Year and a recent cultural visit to Venice all develop awareness of people of a variety of faiths and cultures. The school supports a centre in Kenya which helps pupils understand the needs of others. These experiences extend the pupils' understanding of racial and cultural diversity.

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

- 4.6 Excellent pastoral care and detailed arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety help the school achieve its aim to provide a happy, positive atmosphere in which each pupil feels safe, secure and valued. The caring, friendly and dedicated staff create a community in which pupils flourish and grow up to be confident and responsible young people ready for the next stage of their education. Both home and overseas parents much value the care given to their children.
- 4.7 Pupils are extremely well known to all staff. Form teachers and the new tutorial system provide sympathetic and strong support and guidance, both academically and pastorally. Pupils appreciate the help they receive both in and out of class. The school takes bullying seriously and many pupils said they were unaware of any bullying but felt they received good guidance on how to deal with it, if it did occur. All said that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with quickly and they would be confident about approaching an adult for help. E-safety guidance is part of PSHE. Pupils understand the comprehensive sanctions and rewards system and feel it is generally fair and contributes to positive behaviour. They know they are part of a close-knit community where people look after each other and that they are known and appreciated as individuals. Many pupils also spoke of their appreciation of the help they receive from domestic and administrative staff.
- 4.8 Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and effective. All staff have had appropriate child protection training and the robust policy is well understood and implemented. All necessary measures including fire drills and staff training, have been taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school. Risk assessments are thorough. The school has excellent, well documented arrangements for pupils who are unwell and staff are trained in first aid to complement medical staff in the health centre. The school has an appropriate plan to improve accessibility for those who have disabilities. Pupils understand the importance of exercise and a healthy diet and many commented on the excellent school food. Physical exercise is enjoyed and taken regularly by all pupils. Admission and attendance registers are properly completed and stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.9 Excellent arrangements for boarding contribute extremely well to the pupils' personal development. They feel happy and secure and those who live overseas particularly appreciate this. Relationships between staff and boarders and amongst the boarders themselves are friendly and respectful. In their questionnaire responses they praised the help given them by their houseparents and other boarding staff as well as by their friends. Boarders are encouraged to be independent and feel this makes a strong contribution to their self-confidence and personal development. They learn to respect others, and feel that their social skills and language are strengthened by living in a boarding community.
- 4.10 An excellent range of activities is provided for boarders and many commented on the fun they have on weekend trips. In the evenings, boarders can take part in arranged activities or decide how to spend their time for themselves. Overseas boarders comment that boarding is 'family, fun and freedom'. Day pupils frequently take advantage of flexi-boarding.
- 4.11 Accommodation is comfortable and homely. Pupils have been allowed to choose and buy new furniture and decoration for their common rooms and they all feel a

sense of pride and responsibility for keeping it looking smart. The recent re-design and decoration has been much appreciated by all.

- 4.12 Detailed records are kept of pastoral issues. Documentation in the health centre is excellent and extremely effective in keeping track of both day pupils and boarders' health. Both documentation and accommodation now meet the recommendations of the previous boarding inspection.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is excellent. Since the previous inspection the governing body of the trust has adopted a much more focused approach to supporting the distinctive operations of the preparatory school, meeting the recommendation of that report. It successfully supports the school's aims and ensures the pupils' high standards of achievement and personal development. The Prior Park Educational Trust contains professionals with a range of expertise and within this body a dedicated prep school advisory group now supports the head and staff and visits the school frequently. The trust has a strong strategic vision for the future development of the school, and for financial planning. They see the school as an integral part of the wider Prior Park group and decisions are made with this in mind. Effective sub-committees oversee the work of the school and governors carry through their responsibilities for child protection, welfare and health and safety.
- 5.2 Governors have attended a range of relevant courses to extend their knowledge and expertise. They are well informed about the work of the school through visits and reports from the head and heads of department. The three governors who take a particular responsibility for the school often visit classes from the EYFS upwards, where they observe lessons and talk to teachers. They attend school events and meet socially as well as professionally with staff who feel they are given knowledgeable support. They have been instrumental in providing excellent accommodation and human and material resources necessary to meet the needs of the curriculum.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Strong new leadership and good management show a clear overview of the school's priorities in caring for and supporting pupils so that the aims of the school can be realised. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. A clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses resulting from perceptive self-evaluation has been incorporated in a new strategic development plan. This has resulted in a new management structure. The senior leadership team created as part of the structure has strengthened existing policies and procedures which contribute to the pupils' achievement and learning and ensure the smooth running of the school, meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection report. There is a sense of common purpose in knowing and supporting all pupils to achieve fully their academic and personal development.
- 5.4 Strengths have been built upon and weaknesses identified as areas for action. The new tutorial system has ensured that all older pupils have an adult they can consult at any time and this is seen as a very positive step by both pupils and parents. The new roles of head and assistant head of learning, and head of ethos, are working towards more effective monitoring and tracking of the pupils' progress, overall continuity and progression of curriculum and learning throughout the school and greater community involvement. Subject management is being re-organised and whilst some subjects are expertly led, some have plans which are not yet fully implemented. Staff work extremely well together and are highly committed to the ethos, aims and methods of the school and have a genuine enthusiasm for the pupils and their work. They are excellent role models.

- 5.5 The school development plan complements the governors' strategic planning. Together with well evaluated subject plans, it sets out areas for development and improvement with intended outcomes and ways to achieve them in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection report. All staff are involved in planning and the school's vision is reflected in the high quality of the pupils' achievement and personal development.
- 5.6 Well-implemented whole school policies are regularly reviewed and provide guidance to help achieve the school's commitment to high standards. The school has robust systems for securing, inducting, supporting and training high quality staff who have a range of expertise and experience. The school's recruitment procedures are strong and staff, volunteers, supply staff and governors are suitably checked. Staff value the thorough appraisal and in-service training which ensures progressive staff development and all have received appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Resources are frequently excellent. The central register of appointments is properly maintained.
- 5.7 Pupils and parents particularly appreciate the contribution made by the ancillary staff in the office, cleaning, catering and maintenance departments, saying how much they add to their happy experiences at school.

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

- 5.8 The school's links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent and fully support its aims to involve parents in their children's spiritual and academic development. The parents' responses to questionnaires show a high level of satisfaction with the education provided by the school. Many consider their children fortunate to attend it. They praise all aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision, particularly endorsing the help their children receive from teachers, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, the attention given to pastoral care, and the attitudes and views promoted by the school. Inspectors concur with these views. Some parents whose children receive learning support are particularly pleased with the contact they have with teachers. At the time of the questionnaire early in the year, a few small concerns were raised by parents. These had largely been resolved by the time of the inspection.
- 5.9 Parents can attend formal and informal performances, assemblies and concerts, and some help in the school shop, with visits and in swimming classes for younger children. They can contact staff electronically or personally. The parents' association is an active body which organises social and fund-raising events and gives excellent help to the school, as well as fully supporting the current school charities. The summer 'Night under the Stars' was extremely well attended and much enjoyed by all. Parents are generally happy with the level of information they receive, including regular newsletters and an informative website with topical news. This includes all required information. Detailed and well written reports to parents are sent twice a year as well as effort and achievement grades with comments quarterly for older pupils. Parents feel their concerns are usually addressed promptly, normally by the form teacher or tutor but also by senior staff. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure which has been used correctly when necessary.

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 outstanding setting fulfils its aim of providing a caring learning environment that incorporates a Catholic ethos as well as embracing and respecting other cultures and religious beliefs. It is highly effective in meeting the needs of the children and additional support is provided when required. Outcomes are outstanding. Excellent teaching by class teachers in a nurturing environment ensures that all children achieve high standards in their learning and development. The recent self-evaluation reveals a clear vision for future developments and the capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- 6.2 Leadership and management are good overall with some strong features. Priorities for improvement have been identified. Teachers successfully implement policies which provide valuable guidance, promote equality and eliminate discrimination. An excellent relationship exists with parents who are actively involved in the life of the school. The children's well-being and safeguarding are of paramount importance to the school and thorough risk assessments are in place. Their progress is monitored closely by teachers through ongoing assessments and practical recording systems, although occasionally children are not made fully aware of their individual targets. Recording and on-going assessment are thorough. EYFS profiles are extremely informative. Children have access to a good range of quality resources and these are used effectively.

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

- 6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Children benefit enormously from the shared facilities with the main school. The classrooms are stimulating and reflect the children's interests and the outside learning environment provides excellent opportunities for creative and physical development. The timetable provides a good balance and coverage of the Early Learning Goals. Teachers manage the children's behaviour sensitively, rewarding good work and behaviour with stickers, team points and certificates, whilst providing a warm and secure emotional environment where children are happy and confident. Teachers motivate children with well-chosen activities. Planning is detailed and takes account of the needs of the individual child providing challenge for the most able.

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

- 6.4 Achievement and progress are outstanding. By the end of the Reception year most children achieve high standards in all six areas of learning and the most able exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Children are articulate, listen attentively and respond enthusiastically to the teachers' questions. In Reception they can recognise and read rhyming words confidently and they understand the real value of numbers to twenty. Children know how to stay safe as was demonstrated when the Nursery class walked to the sports hall. They are beginning to develop independence in dressing and wash their hands regularly throughout the day. Children are aware of the need to make healthy choices about what to eat and drink.

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

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| Mrs Margaret Smallwood | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Jeanette Adams | Deputy Head, IAPS school |
| Mr Richard Evans | Head IAPS, school |
| Mr Anthony Lowery | Director of Studies, IAPS school |
| Miss Mary Regan | Early Years Co-ordinating inspector |