



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SOLEFIELD PREPARATORY SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Solefield Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Solefield Preparatory School			
DfE Number	886/6038			
Registered Charity Number	293466			
Address	Solefield Preparatory School Solefields Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1PH			
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Email Address	a.osborn@solefieldschool.org			
Head	Mr Dougal Philps			
Chair of Governors	Mr Robert Clewley			
Age Range	4 to 13			
Total Number of Pupils	164			
Gender of Pupils	Boys			
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	13	5-11:	118
	11-18:	33		
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	164		
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Marie Grant			
EYFS Gender	Boys			
Inspection dates	01 Feb 2011 to 02 Feb 2011			
	02 Mar 2011 to 04 Mar 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 May 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 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 Solefield School, a preparatory school founded in 1948, is situated on the south side of Sevenoaks in a large town house, with additional accommodation including a science and art block, a hall and purpose built music school. A new block, including three classrooms, a library and an information and communication technology (ICT) room, was completed in April 2008. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is housed within the main school building with its own play area and separate access into the building. The current headmaster was appointed in September 2006.
- 1.2 In 1986 the school became a charitable non-profit-making educational trust, under the guidance of a board of governors. The governing body consists of people with experience in business and academic life, many of whom are parents of current or former pupils. The school's aim is to promote and expect high standards in every area of school life and desires the happiness and success of every child. It provides education for 164 boys aged 4 to 13 years, all of whom are day pupils. The school is divided into two departments: a junior school for boys aged 4 to 8, of whom 12 are in the EYFS, and a senior school for boys aged 8 to 13. The school does not enter pupils for national tests at the ages of 7 or 11. The ability profile of the school is above the national average and is monitored with verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests, alongside standardised tests in mathematics and English. Pupils are drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds in the surrounding communities and most are white with UK heritage. At 11+ many pupils gain places at local grammar schools, though most leave at the end of Year 8 to join a range of independent schools in the area.
- 1.3 Entry to the school is subject to availability of places. Boys may be registered for entry into the Reception class from the age of 4 where entry is non-selective. One pupil uses English as an additional language (EAL). Thirty-two pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), of whom fourteen receive support for their learning. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN).
- 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 overall achievements of the pupils are excellent. Throughout the school, from the EYFS onwards, pupils of all abilities are highly successful in their learning and personal development, meeting the school's aims. Good, and often excellent teaching within a broad and varied curriculum, as well as activities and clubs, stimulate pupils and encourage them to work hard, flourish and improve. Their constructive and cheerful attitude and courteous demeanour contribute effectively towards their many individual successes. The school recognises that occasions for challenge exist across all areas of the curriculum and ensures that pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education with strong links to schools in the locality and good progress is supported by considerable application and perseverance. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is under-used in the classroom, although matters are improving, and there is limited opportunity for pupils to undertake independent learning activities. In general, the quality of marking in all parts of the school is positive and helpful.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent and is supported by excellent pastoral care arrangements. Pupils say they feel safe and secure at school. Effective and clearly defined welfare provision and thorough health and safety procedures complement the work of all the staff. Pupils show respect for each other and their teachers and work co-operatively together in lessons and in activities. Throughout the school, pupils develop supportive relationships with each other, and there are many opportunities for older pupils to take on responsibility. The pupils show excellent social awareness, keenly working for a variety of different charities and showing consideration for those less fortunate than themselves.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The governing body and senior management team are diligent and dedicated to the aims and ethos of the school, which are fulfilled very well, particularly that of encouraging each child to do his best and to take a pride in all that he does. Recommendations from the previous inspection have largely been implemented and are being further developed under the purposeful leadership. A new structure for staff curriculum responsibility is effective and thorough. Parents are most appreciative of the progress pupils make at school and the nurturing care and support their children receive. Links with parents are extremely positive, as were replies to the questionnaire, particularly in regard to the pastoral care of their children. Although a small minority of parents were critical of the learning support provision and behaviour of the pupils, the inspectors could find no evidence to support these observations.

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. Further enhance teaching to provide pupils, including those in the EYFS, with more opportunities for independent work, investigation and open-ended discussion.
2. Use the expertise available to develop more creative use of ICT in all classrooms.

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 achievements of the pupils are excellent. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are well educated, and their excellent achievement in academic work and extra-curricular activities fulfils the school's aim of encouraging each child to do his best and to take a pride in all that he does. Pupils develop well in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils are articulate and inventive, and they express themselves coherently. They listen considerately to each other's comments and to the directions of their teachers. In the younger classes the pupils develop good handwriting skills. Amongst older pupils, the presentation of their work is of high quality, demonstrating the application and energy they put into it. From an early age, pupils reason well and can think for themselves, although the opportunities to develop these skills further is sometimes limited by teaching that restricts independent reflection. In mathematics, pupils exhibit mental dexterity and acquire a wide range of skills. They are able to apply concepts accurately and relate them to real-life situations.
- 3.2 Computer skills are good overall and are used throughout the school by all pupils to undertake a wide range of assignments. Older pupils write extended pieces that are often imaginative, and use a wide and descriptive vocabulary. The pupils' creativity is strong, as demonstrated by their striking artwork displayed around the school and through the excellent music groups and high quality dramatic productions. They enjoy undertaking scientific experiments and show good understanding of their work; pupils in Year 6 were clear when interviewed about the meaning of a fair test to produce sound results. Pupils are successful in gaining academic, sport, music and drama scholarships to local independent schools. At national level pupils have excelled in judo, gaining individual and team medals, and they have been successful at county level in tennis and table tennis. They recently achieved excellent results in the Independent Schools Examination Board (ISEB) Certificate of Attainment in Spanish and regularly take part in the Shakespeare for Schools Festival.
- 3.3 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests as the school does not enter pupils for these tests at the ages of 7 and 11. However, evidence from the inspection, gained from the observation of lessons, the scrutiny of the pupils' work, and discussions with them, shows that standards are exceptional in relation to national expectations. Pupils make good progress in their learning over time and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. Pupils with LDD and the most able pupils make good progress, aided by teaching assistants and gap year students. The pupils' many successes inside and outside the classroom owe much to their positive attitudes, the opportunities provided by the curriculum and the constructive relationships they enjoy with their enthusiastic teachers. Pupils co-operate well, helping each other, and learning from one another. Throughout the school, pupils are hard-working, contented and well-behaved learners who enjoy all they undertake at school with whole-heartedness and commitment.

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

- 3.4 Pupils throughout the school, including the EYFS, benefit from an excellent curriculum which captures their interest and provides very well for their academic, creative, physical and personal development. The curriculum is well suited to the ages, abilities and needs of all its pupils and successfully meets its key aim of providing as many opportunities as possible for each child to discover his own talents and the time and encouragement to develop them. All the essential areas of learning are covered, as well as French from Year 2, Spanish and Latin from Year 6, drama to Years 4, 5 and 6, mythology to Years 4 and 5, judo to Years 3 and 4 and Greek to the Year 8 scholars. Specialist subject teaching for older pupils and some younger pupils enhances the curriculum in its scope and variety.
- 3.5 Personal, social and health education (PSHE), including citizenship, is well planned and taught as a discrete subject. It pays very good attention to the dangers of bullying and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The quality and use of ICT provision has improved significantly since the last inspection, and it enhances pupils' achievement across a range of subjects. The well-stocked and spacious library, organised largely by volunteer parents, is used productively by pupils for research and reading.
- 3.6 The curriculum for older pupils is demanding and highly stimulating, and prepares pupils extremely well for their move to senior schools. It is very well planned by subject co-ordinators and is implemented effectively. There is excellent challenge and support for pupils of all abilities who are provided in lessons with the opportunity of achieving their full potential. Pupils with LDD are well supported and have appropriate educational action plans. The most able are provided with suitable activities to challenge and stimulate them.
- 3.7 An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, available at lunchtime and after school, is very popular and contributes significantly to the pupils' personal development. High quality opportunities are provided to develop the pupils' creative and sporting talents and all have the opportunity of representing the school in competitive matches. In addition, opportunities as diverse as chess, golf, creative writing, French film, cookery and juggling provide for the wide assortment of preferences and interests.
- 3.8 Guest speakers augment the curriculum further, and educational visits to places of interest, including those as different as a mosque and a local pizzeria, extend pupils' knowledge of the locality. In addition, annual residential visits for older pupils to York, Barcelona, France and Wales develop cultural awareness and fieldwork skills. Pupils benefit from links with the local community through choral performances at local venues and old people's homes. Pupils are currently raising money through a variety of their own initiatives for a local hospice.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 Teaching is good overall and sometimes excellent across the school as a whole. The value of teaching is central to the school's success in meeting its aim of providing top-quality teaching in every area and aspect of the school curriculum. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Good practice is now discussed and shared more widely, and effective assessment data, helpful marking and carefully considered planning are used to much greater effect. Teaching is well prepared and efficiently organised so that pupils make good progress. The teaching of pupils with LDD effectively secures pupils' learning through a combination of sessions for individuals and groups, and support within lessons. Pupils benefit from some specialist-taught lessons in which teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subject. Teaching assistants provide additional support to pupils in the junior school classes and, when employed to best effect, enable pupils to remain clearly focused on the task in hand and fully challenged.
- 3.10 In many lessons, pupils are caught up in the curiosity and delight of learning, whether preparing songs to sing at a local festival in Year 3 or learning to speak French through prompts from a computer program in Year 8. At its most successful, teaching is characterised by well-prepared, interesting lessons and work that demands high standards from pupils of all abilities. In some lessons, though teaching is thorough and covers the required ground, questions check knowledge without extending the pupils' independent thought or tapping into their natural creativity. When this occurs pupils are not fully challenged, resulting in an over-emphasis on review and repetition.
- 3.11 Varied teaching methods, employing group discussion, paired work and some independent research, supports learning. Across the school, ICT is used effectively to support some of the best teaching, and interactive whiteboards are beginning to be used more innovatively in lessons to promote learning. The pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes ensure that they benefit from the good teaching. Teachers generally make good use of time. They use a good range of resources effectively and regularly set homework, which appropriately reinforces and extends tasks undertaken in class.
- 3.12 Marking of the pupils' work takes place regularly and, at its most effective, there is close attention to areas for improvement as well as recognition of successful learning. Arrangements to track and assess the pupils' performance have developed further since the previous inspection. Results from a range of commercially available tests and the school's own internal examinations provide a valuable means of identifying and checking abilities and progress throughout the school. As a result, teaching is adapted well to the relative abilities of different pupils.

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 pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness and development is excellent and fulfils the school's aim of creating an atmosphere where all children and adults respect each other and make allowances for the needs of others. Spiritual awareness is excellent and is carefully nurtured by the praise and encouragement of the staff. The supportive ethos of the school leads to a strong feeling of self-esteem and self-worth as well as the clear development of a concern for the welfare of others. Pupils gain an insight into Christian beliefs and practice and those of other faiths through religious education (RE) lessons and through assemblies, which are sometimes led by the pupils. They are encouraged to explore their feelings and emotions in PSHE lessons and are beginning to understand the value of friendship and love. Pupils develop a strong moral awareness and are able to identify the difference between right and wrong from an early age. They respect and appreciate the need for school rules, which are customised by each class as appropriate and displayed in classrooms and in their planners. Opportunities are available within PSHE for pupils to develop their self-knowledge and understanding of such issues as friendship, bullying and citizenship.
- 4.2 Social development, with regard to their position as members of the school and wider community, is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to think of others as well as themselves. The school council provides the opportunity for pupils to develop a sense of collective responsibility. The head boy, deputy head boys and prefects have a good level of responsibility and support the staff at registration time, in the dining room and with other duties. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of public institutions and held mock elections to coincide with the general election. Respect for the community is fostered by visits from the police and fire brigade and pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming.
- 4.3 Pupils have excellent levels of cultural awareness. In assemblies and subjects such as RE, geography, history and French, pupils consider their own culture and those of others, which helps them develop a sense of empathy, tolerance and acceptance. This is exemplified by the links that the school is establishing with a school in Malawi and also on trips to France and Spain. Pupils display a willingness to participate in and respond to artistic, musical and drama activities, thus extending their cultural awareness and appreciation.

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

- 4.4 Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. They fulfil the school's aim of providing excellent pastoral care where every member of staff knows every boy and treats each as an individual. The arrangements for the care of pupils, centred on the class teacher, are clear and enable personal development to flourish alongside academic achievement. Staff regularly discuss concerns about pupils at staff meetings and an effective policy formalises the co-ordination of care throughout the school. Thoughtful, sympathetic relationships are the norm in the classroom and the playground, and new pupils quickly feel welcomed into friendship groups. Pupils like and respect the staff, who respond with kindness and consideration. The balance between rewards and sanctions is appropriate. The pupils say that on the rare occasions when bullying occurs it is dealt with quickly, tactfully and fittingly. They feel safe in school and know to whom they should turn, if

the need arises. The school has robust procedures in place to endorse good behaviour, which are promoted at assemblies and in PSHE lessons.

- 4.5 The safe recruitment of staff is a priority and all the relevant checks are carried out and accurately recorded in the central register of staff. The school takes its responsibility for child protection very seriously through the careful implementation of its thorough policy. Training for the whole staff in child protection is carried out on a regular basis and designated officers have received guidance at the correct level for their roles. All staff have a good working knowledge of these procedures. Health and safety policies are comprehensive and regular meetings are held to review their effectiveness. Measures have been taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Electrical equipment is checked appropriately and recently developed risk assessments cover all areas of school life. Medical facilities are adequate in the event of a child falling ill during the day and suitably qualified first-aiders are on hand throughout the school. Efficient systems are in place to record accidents and injuries. The school has shown an awareness of the need to include disabled access in its buildings and has an accessibility plan covering 2009 to 2012 in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained and correctly stored. School food is nutritious, and pupils have plenty of opportunities to participate in physical exercise and understand the importance of doing so.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of Solefield School is outstanding. The governors, many of whom are parents of past or present pupils, are strongly committed to the ethos of the school. Financial planning is meticulous, and careful investment in resources has resulted in good facilities, both for academic study and extra-curricular activities. The work of various committees, covering areas such as education, buildings and maintenance, health and safety and marketing means that governors are suitably informed about the school. This supplements the knowledge and considerable quantity of information provided by the headmaster. The excellent range of skills and expertise represented on the governing body ensures that every aspect of the school is very well considered.
- 5.2 Since the previous inspection, the structure of the governing body has been modified slightly to include expertise in preparatory school education and marketing. Individual governors visit the school regularly to observe lessons, talk to staff and provide support to the school. In addition, regular subject presentations are given by staff to the governing body. This ensures that governors are well placed to oversee the fulfilment of the school's aims. Applications to the school are monitored and a significant interest is taken in the destinations of pupils who leave to join senior schools, some of whom return as gap year students.
- 5.3 The governors are very well informed about the developmental needs of the school and make efforts to keep in close contact with the parents to ascertain their views and thoughts. A development plan, which is regularly monitored, reviewed and updated, sets out the strategic future progress of the whole school. The process of recording and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's policies and procedures is detailed and scrupulous.
- 5.4 Governors are thorough in the implementation of their statutory duties and take seriously their responsibilities, including carrying out checks to show that staff appointments are being handled correctly. They recognise the importance of training and have recently attended sessions on child protection and safer recruitment. Issues relating to health and safety, welfare and safeguarding are carefully and methodically considered, with governor representation on all appropriate school committees. The governors oversee a thriving school, which successfully secures its aims, promotes the academic and pastoral growth of its pupils, and provides a diverse setting in which pupils flourish.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 Leadership and management throughout the school, including the EYFS, are excellent. They provide a diverse educational experience for all pupils whilst achieving the highest academic standards in conjunction with a clear vision for the school's future development. They successfully fulfil the school's aim of providing purposeful and clear leadership of the staff by the headmaster, and allow pupils to learn and attain successfully by developing positive attitudes to their education within the framework of friendly and supportive surroundings. The senior management team, supported by the staff, has a perceptive understanding of both the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement, and has initiated many useful strategies to maintain and build on the school's many accomplishments.

- 5.6 The senior management team is successful in self-evaluation and setting priorities. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly, and the planning of the curriculum is clearly organised and promulgated through frequent meetings with particular groups of staff. Effective communication between consecutive year groups and between staff teaching within each year is strong. Regular formal and informal discussions take place to ensure that the curriculum and extra-curricular activities run continuously and effectively. Policies and procedures affecting the pupils are updated recurrently according to need. The success of leadership and management is reflected in the affirmative attitudes of all staff in the school, teaching and non-teaching, which supports the excellent personal development and welfare of pupils.
- 5.7 Leadership makes a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff and an effective formal staff review process is carried out every three years. Structured mutual observation of lessons takes place between staff each term, and the headmaster joins the junior school every Wednesday morning to observe, teach and scrutinise work. Staff receive regular training to enable them to implement safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety policies. Procedures for the proper recruitment of staff are in place. The school management is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient good-quality staff and ensuring they are suitably qualified for their roles, including carrying out and recording the required checks of their suitability. Effective systems of induction for new staff and any who are newly qualified, together with a helpful and comprehensive staff handbook, ensure uniformity of approach. The school's premises are used to good effect and accommodation is well maintained.

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

- 5.8 The school has established excellent links with parents and maintains constructive relationships in accordance with its aim of building a partnership between the school and home, based on mutual respect and trust. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were positive and parents expressed satisfaction with most aspects of the school, including the curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities, the progress their children make and the high quality of pastoral care. A small minority of parents indicated some dissatisfaction with the provision for pupils with LDD and with standards of behaviour, though inspectors found no reason to corroborate these views.
- 5.9 Parents are involved in the activities of the school. They work in the library and frequently assist with school trips, and the well-supported parents association organises social events and raises money for school equipment. The school operates an open door policy and hosts parents coffee mornings and drinks evenings which allow parents opportunities to interact socially with staff, including the headmaster and his wife. There are regular meetings for the parents of form representatives and there is good parental representation on the governing body. The parents are regularly consulted on the school's development plan, which enables them to feel valued and demonstrates that their opinions are much appreciated in an effective working partnership with the school.
- 5.10 Parents receive regular communication about the school, in addition to the required information for prospective and current parents. There is a parent area on the website providing a wealth of useful information including a 'stop press' section. They receive a fortnightly 'Acorn' newsletter. Such information helps parents to understand the aims and ethos of the school and to understand how it functions on a daily basis. Two senior school heads visited recently to provide information for

parents about future schools. Parents receive reports at the end of every term which are personal and informative; the best of these provide useful information regarding achievement and clear guidance as to how the pupil can improve. Parents' evenings provide a formal meeting time with staff who may be contacted and seen at any time by parents to discuss progress or concerns. The school has a clear procedure for parental complaints and handles any concerns promptly and with care.

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 provision for all children is outstanding and the needs of all children are well met. This enables the school to fulfil its principal aims of providing a safe, challenging, caring and sharing environment, sensitive to the needs of all children including those with LDD. The school recognises the importance of the individual child. Parents are very pleased with their children's progress and the high quality of pastoral care provided by the school. There are good links with the local community through a grandparents' day and harvest festival. There is an excellent capacity for continued improvement. Meticulous tracking of the children's progress enables them to learn effectively.

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

6.2 The leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. The necessary policies, risk assessments and procedures are in place to safeguard all children equally. Staff are suitably qualified, all the necessary checks have been made and the required ratio of adults to pupils is appropriate. Good links have been established with local nurseries and local authority advisors who provide moderation and training. Planning, formal systems for monitoring the children's work and self-evaluation are outstanding. This was an area identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Weekly minuted meetings are held with the junior department staff. The school's strong partnership with parents ensures that they are kept fully involved in their children's education through regular reports and parents' evenings. Comprehensive risk assessments ensure that buildings, furniture, indoor and outdoor equipment are regularly checked and are safe. The school is very well resourced and these resources are used effectively.

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

6.3 The quality of provision in the EYFS is outstanding and supports all six areas of learning and development extremely well. Children benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched by lessons in physical education, music, swimming and violin, all taught by specialist teachers. An excellent range of visits and visitors further enhances the curriculum. Staff have developed effective procedures for observing children's learning and play and to evaluate their progress. The outdoor environment stimulates children's role play and exploration in all weathers. The classroom is well planned with colourful displays, and both children and adults use interactive whiteboards confidently; for example, on arrival the children self-register using them prior to formal registration. Enthusiastic staff work effectively together, ensuring that the children know and understand the importance of good health and how to stay safe.

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

- 6.4 Children make outstanding progress in their learning in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Literacy and numeracy are strongly promoted and children use words and numbers confidently. Although they are generally capable of working independently, these aspects are sometimes under-developed. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is excellent, which was effectively demonstrated through a Chinese New Year topic. Excellent relationships with staff enable the children to respond confidently to all the educational experiences at school. The children are exuberant, yet polite and friendly towards their class mates and through the effective application of class rules understand how to share, be kind and stay safe. They respond well to praise and encouragement and find learning fun.

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

Inspectors

Mr David Horn

Reporting Inspector

Mr Jeremy Gear

Head, IAPS School

Mrs Jacqueline Merva

Deputy Head, IAPS School

Mrs Deborah Buckenham

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector