



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**SOUTHBANK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Southbank International School

The senior school and the second junior school in Hampstead were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of School	<b>Southbank International School</b>		
DCSF Number	<b>207/6383</b>		
Address	<b>Southbank International School 36-38 Kensington Park Road London W11 3BU</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>0207 229 8230</b>		
Fax Number	<b>0207 229 3784</b>		
Email Address	<b>helen.watson@southbank.org</b>		
Principal	<b>Miss Judith Kingsbury</b>		
Proprietor	<b>Cognita Schools Ltd</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>212</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (106 boys; 106 girls;)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>165</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>47</b>	11-18: <b>0</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>212</b>		
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Ms Hermione Palmer</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection date/EYFS	<b>22 Feb 2010 to 23 Feb 2010</b>		
Final (team) visit	<b>22 Mar 2010 to 24 Mar 2010</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It 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 December 2003.

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 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard 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 does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Southbank School was founded in London in 1979 as the American International school for pupils aged 13 to 18 by Mr Milton Toubkin and five other educators; it was renamed Southbank International School in 1981 and moved a number of times before settling at the Kensington campus in 1989. In 1992 Southbank Primary School was opened on the same campus and in 1995 a second junior school was opened in Hampstead. In 2003 the school opened a campus in Portland Place, Westminster for pupils in Year 7 and above and the Kensington site was remodelled as a primary school for pupils up to and including Year 6.
- 1.2 In 2006, the school was taken over by Cognita Schools Ltd., who exercise their responsibilities as proprietor through the director of international schools, who sits on the education board for the whole school and who reports to the Cognita main board.
- 1.3 The everyday oversight of the three campuses is devolved to the education board, whose chair is currently the director of admissions for the whole school, and whose other members include the three principals as well as the director of international schools. The board's key responsibilities are formulating the mission statement and maintaining the whole school's core values, together with drawing up the school's long-term development plans and its academic programme. The board also approve whole-school policies and provide communication between the three campuses. They implement the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and oversee the completion of the central register of staff appointments. Marketing, finance, admissions, payroll and personnel and staff appointments are all handled centrally for all four Southbank sites.
- 1.4 Pupils are drawn from the international community based in London and 40 different nationalities are represented. Each year around one-fifth of pupils leave as a consequence of their parents' occupations. On average most pupils remain at the school for between three and five years before moving to other schools overseas. There are 47 pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and 165 pupils in the junior school with an even mix of boys and girls.
- 1.5 The aims of the school as a whole are summed up in its mission statement: "Southbank International School is committed to developing students who are internationally minded, independent, enthusiastic about life and learning, and imbued with a sense of service to others. Our school strives for excellence in a happy, caring community founded on integrity and respect." The school was one of the first in England to offer the Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB).

- 1.6 Pupils are admitted on the basis of reports from their previous school and a drawing or essay depending on their age. The school does not take tests of ability which are nationally standardised against UK norms. During the inspection, pupils' average ability was judged to be above the average for maintained primary schools in the UK. Standardised data showed that pupils' average progress was above the average for international schools taking the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) International Schools Assessment. The school has 102 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), of whom 22 receive support. The school has identified 31 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom thirteen receive specialist support outside school and eighteen receive support within school. The school produces international individual learning plans. (IILPs) for those receiving support. There are no pupils with statements of special education needs.
- 1.7 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 (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
EC3	Nursery
EC4	Reception

***Junior Department***

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Year 1
Grade 1	Year 2
Grade 2	Year 3
Grade 3	Year 4
Grade 4	Year 5
Grade 5	Year 6

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

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

- 2.1 Overall, progress is good in relation to students' abilities, and the development of research study skills further increases their performance. Good and effective teaching promotes positive attitudes and cultural development through utilising the full breadth of the curriculum. Curriculum provision is generally very effective in its coverage of most areas of learning and successfully supports the aims of the school but some of the units of inquiry contain little explicit science leading to an imbalance in the curriculum across the school year. The PYP is unusual in that it does not focus on individual subjects but on six different units of inquiry; children in nursery and reception experience four of these throughout a school year, and students in Years 1 to 6 experience all six. All units explore trans-disciplinary themes. The good quality of teaching enables pupils to achieve their potential, with some outstanding lessons where teachers understand the needs of their pupils and are committed to making provision for them. A variety of teaching styles is employed to obtain the best results from their pupils; however, the most able pupils are not consistently provided with sufficiently challenging work.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is a notable feature of the school. Extra-curricular activities promote initiative and encourage wide spread interests. The high quality of pastoral care and the good relationships between staff and pupils create a happy, caring and productive working environment.
- 2.3 Governance is satisfactory. The proprietor provides appropriate oversight of strategy, and support for the aims and ethos of the school; the education board oversees school development and coordinates the work of the schools well. However, some aspects of staff recruitment have not been completed properly. The leadership and management team of the Kensington campus is successful in creating a unique ethos for the school through its belief in the principles of the IB and its successful implementation. The school has an 'open door' policy which is greatly valued by parents who appreciate the varied opportunities to be fully involved in school life.

### **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 did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended, and therefore it was required to:
- ensure that an enhanced criminal record check is made by the proprietor in respect of any person employed at the school and that any enhanced criminal record certificate which is the subject of the application is obtained before or as soon as practicable after the appointment [Regulation 4(2)(b) under the Standard for the suitability of staff and proprietors];
  - ensure that in relation to each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007 the register shall show where a check was made to establish whether the member of staff is subject to any direction under section 142

of the 2002 Act (reference to List 99) [Regulation 4C(2)(b) under the Standard for the suitability of staff and proprietors];

- ensure that in relation to each member of staff appointed before 1 May 2007 the register shows whether each check in sub-paragraph 2 above was carried out [Regulation 4C(3) under the Standard for the suitability of staff and proprietors];
- for the same reason as the above, implement all aspects of the safeguarding policy [Regulation 3(2)(b)].

2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.

2.6 In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:

- ensure that assessment requirements are correctly applied and that parents receive a written summary reporting the child's progress against the early learning goals and the assessment scales.

**(ii) Recommended action**

2.7 In addition to rectifying the weaknesses in meeting regulatory requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Continue to monitor the quantity and quality of science provision in the PYP.
2. Identify students who are gifted and talented and provide suitable additional support for them.
3. Further raise the existing good quality of teaching to ensure that the improved standards in the outstanding lessons are disseminated to all members of staff.
4. Ensure that practitioners undergo training so that they understand fully the requirements of the EYFS.
5. Make greater use of outside agencies such the police and fire services within the EYFS to promote children's knowledge of the dangers that they may encounter out of school.



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

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

- 3.1 Overall, pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims. The pupils have good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill across the curriculum. They have a well-developed ability in speaking and listening and, through the PYP curriculum, show exceptionally mature logical and independent thinking. For example, work scrutiny in Year 3 showed exceptional reading and writing skills though work in later years, where pupils need greater individual support, was less extensive and of lower quality. Through the PYP, all pupils develop and become very proficient in using ICT. The use of ICT as a tool improves the quality of work and presentation across the curriculum. The school has significantly improved standards of ICT and science since the previous inspection.
- 3.2 Pupils work well individually, becoming intrinsically motivated to do well. They work particularly effectively in co-operative ventures in small groups. The developmental nature of the curriculum means that pupils are encouraged to improve their own performance rather than compete against one another. Almost all pupils show extremely mature and positive attitudes to learning fostered by the PYP, which encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. The international nature of the school supports pupils' considerable understanding of global issues and their commitment to a multi-cultural world.
- 3.3 The PYP curriculum is enhanced by additional English, mathematics, Spanish, art, music, physical education (PE) and Suzuki violin and cello which are taught as single subjects outside the normal PYP units of inquiry. Pupils make rapid progress and achieve high standards in these areas. In mathematics pupils had a good knowledge of graphical representation, data handling skills and some basic geometry involving shape and space so that sound standards were achieved, but the more able were not always suitably challenged.

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

- 3.4 The curriculum provides a high quality education in line with the school's aims of developing enquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people. The considerable breadth of the PYP, encompassing the six major themes of: who we are; where we are in place and time; how we express ourselves; how the world works; how we organise ourselves; and sharing the planet, enables pupils to understand how the curriculum is relevant to the wider world. Further enrichment includes the stand alone lessons in language and mathematics, Spanish, art, music, PE and Suzuki violin and cello. Curriculum planning is detailed and comprehensive following the PYP guidance, ensuring that parallel classes cover similar areas at appropriate times. The study of science is divided into four main overlapping strands involving living things, earth and space, materials and matter, and forces and energy but as a core curricular subject is not given a key position. The PYP is particularly effective in dealing with the study of humans and animals and the study of energy where pupils are particularly concerned for the eco-systems of the planet and it is a considerable improvement on the situation commented upon in the previous report. Nevertheless, the provision for science and design/technology (DT) is not consistent throughout the six PYP units, leading to an imbalance in the curriculum across the year. The

use of enquiry-based learning and the development of independent research skills contribute strongly to pupils' achievements.

- 3.5 The programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) effectively reflects the aims and ethos of the school and contributes much to pupils' personal development as the IB learner profile lays great stress on acting with integrity and honesty and with a strong sense of fairness. All pupils are encouraged to be open-minded and evaluate a range of points of view. The learner profile also requires pupils to be reflective and caring showing empathy, compassion and respect towards the feelings of others.
- 3.6 Every pupil from Kindergarten upwards learns to play the violin or cello through the Suzuki method of instrumental instruction and parents are expected to attend these lessons and encourage further practice at home which ensures outstanding progress. For the past two years, upper year pupils have participated in the annual Clic Sargent concert in the Royal Albert Hall; pupils attend professional concert performances and are able to effectively make critiques of composers' work.
- 3.7 The support for EAL is strong even though approximately half of the pupils are operating in their second, third or fourth language, and many parents comment about their children's rapid progress. The home languages of pupils are well respected and, through positive support, promote student cultural identity.
- 3.8 Detailed ILLPs have been developed with a clear focus on targets for improvement. The school has over 30 pupils with learning difficulties, thirteen of whom receive skilled support within the school. Detailed records are kept and varying strategies employed to ensure beneficial progress. There are few effective procedures to enable gifted and talented pupils to be identified and achieve their full potential.
- 3.9 The range of extra-curricular activities is good and ranges from media studies and problem solving to ice-skating and soccer; pupils commented in the questionnaire that they were able to join in a good range of extra-curricular activities. Competitive sports are being introduced with a chance for pupils to represent the school at team level. Educational visits figure strongly in the curriculum and fully support the aim to be a "School without walls". Such visits feature in all years; for example, Year 3 visit the science museum and Greenwich observatory and Year 4 visit the Houses of Parliament. An annual residential trip for Year 6 and a musical tour to Prague have also been undertaken.
- 3.10 The strong sense of community extends outside the school into the local community. Pupils have played music at a local nursing home and organised charity collections involving supervised street performances. Visits by the police, road safety instructors and parents have provided extra enrichment to the curriculum.

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

- 3.11 Teaching is good overall, and some of it is excellent. Teachers are well aware of pupils with LDD or EAL, and work is tailored to their needs with different outcomes planned for the wide variety of ability levels. Some pupils have one-to-one help as identified in their IILPs, and others receive private help outside school. Literacy and numeracy skills are strongly emphasised from Kindergarten onwards; as a result, pupils' oral communication and self-confidence are built up well. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects and make good use of time and resources. They plan well, and individual lesson planning fully details the context of the lesson. The majority of classrooms have interactive whiteboards, which are used effectively to stimulate the pupils' interests. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect.
- 3.12 The opportunities for independent learning are outstanding and well directed by able teachers. A very successful lesson was seen on the skill of effective note-taking. The best lessons include open-ended questioning to direct pupils towards the development of independent research skills. In a very few lessons these high standards were not reached and there was a slow pace of working with insufficient or over-explanation, and therefore the learning was not as successful. However, in the vast majority of lessons good organisation, prior assessment and a brisk pace ensures successful learning and high levels of achievement. Staff use a wide variety of teaching strategies to ensure that the lessons suitably challenge all pupils such as in discussion of how migration impacted on London's cultural landscape to ensure comparison between the Jewish immigration to the East End of London as opposed to the later Afro-Caribbean migration into Britain. Such difficult concepts were handled sympathetically and with great maturity by all pupils.
- 3.13 There is effective pre-assessment, which gives teachers a good awareness of the pupils' current levels of understanding and which is used to inform planning. Additionally self-assessment is used to ensure that pupils take an active role in gathering and analysing information about their own progress. Teachers make many encouraging comments and use attractive stickers with the younger classes. Teachers record progress and keep good records for the IB profile, but because much of the work is collaborative group work individual pupils do not receive clear assessment of their progress day by day.

## **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' personal development is excellent. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding, because of the opportunities within the PYP to enhance their self-esteem, self-knowledge, self-awareness and sense of responsibility. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities provided by the school to fulfil its aims; "striving for excellence in a happy, caring community founded on integrity and respect". Progress since the previous inspection has been excellent; improvements in spiritual and social development, together with the creation of a formal PSHE programme, have significantly contributed to the pupils' exceptional standards of personal development.
- 4.2 Pupils have opportunities to successfully explore new experiences and understand one another's spiritual beliefs within the international community. They are encouraged to be open-minded and informed regarding faiths. They share experience of other faiths; for example, they took part in a Santa Lucia service produced by Swedish pupils. Leave of absence is granted for faith events. Pupils have opportunities within the curriculum to reflect on the nature of life and the physical world in science and to appreciate each other's cultural backgrounds.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate a well-developed ability to distinguish right from wrong; returning borrowed resources in lessons and helping new pupils quickly settle into the community. Pupils understand about acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. They express a clear disapproval of bullying or unkindness in discussions. In the pupil questionnaire, one pupil responded, "The school has a safe and welcoming environment. Once you make friends you feel you have been here all your life". Pupils' moral development is strong.
- 4.4 Pupils show excellent social development, and have a well-developed social conscience. They are supportive of one another in group work, in class, and in inclusive play in the playground. Whilst limited opportunities exist for pupils to exercise responsibility, class helpers were seen to issue work sheets and help in tidying up at the end of lessons. The student council provides a voice for the pupils, and all classes from Kindergarten upwards provide representative members; it is extremely active in fund-raising for school-sponsored charities. Increasing opportunities exist to play in competing soccer teams and represent the school. Since the previous inspection a student council has been instituted and Student Action encourages pupils to organise fund-raising events and considerable amounts of monies have been raised for local, national and international charities. These included £3000 for 'HoneyPot', a UK charity to support children who act as carers. Pupils learn a basic knowledge of public institutions and services through visits to the Houses of Parliament and numerous contacts with local authorities regarding elements in the PYP dealing with recycling, waste disposal and the protection of the planet.

4.5 Pupils' excellent cultural development is enhanced by the nature of this non-British community. 'International night' celebrates the food and culture of nations and a Friday activity involves pupils developing their native language. Students are encouraged to appreciate the British cultural tradition through art, music and visits to theatres, concerts, galleries and museums; this reflects one of the school's founding principles, "A school without walls". Pupils have taken part in a music trip to Prague, and Year 6 annually camp in Wales to further develop their cultural and social skills.

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

4.6 The quality of pastoral care, welfare and health and safety is good. It successfully promotes a climate of trust, develops positive relationships and confidence, and makes a major contribution to the school's aims to treat everyone fairly and respect of the individual. Small class sizes enable teachers to know their pupils well so that they can provide support when and where necessary. Pupils report that they find it easy to approach members of staff with problems and are confident that their concerns will be resolved.

4.7 This genuine interest staff take in their pupils fosters mutual trust and understanding. Pupils are open, well-mannered and courteous and, while both committed and well-motivated, are extremely relaxed and good-humoured. These excellent relationships are a strong factor in the school's success in achieving its aim of striving for excellence in a happy, caring community founded on integrity and respect. Regular academic meetings provide up-to-date profiling and assessment. Assessment portfolios enable continuity in care as pupils move through the school and when there is a change of teacher.

4.8 A good standard of behaviour and discipline is evident, and pupils understand that high standards are expected. Bullying was not a noted concern amongst pupils, though they are confident it would be dealt with quickly should it occur. Pupils' welfare is a high priority which is reflected in the comprehensive child protection policy and procedures, together with appropriate guidelines for staff. The assistant principal is the designated child protection officer (CPO). All staff receive appropriate child protection training, and this is included in staff training and induction. However, some staff recruitment procedures were not followed fully.

4.9 All measures to conform to fire safety requirements have been taken. The arrangements for health and safety are effective. A qualified facilities manager coordinates and oversees all areas of risk assessment. A number of staff are trained as first-aiders, and all staff are trained in giving emergency injections for allergic reactions. The school makes appropriate provision for the care of pupils who are ill. It has appropriate plans to improve access for disabled pupils, and within the constraints of the building it has made suitable provision for access for the disabled wherever possible. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained

4.10 An outside caterer provides hot meals for those pupils requiring them and, although there is no choice, pupils are involved through the PYP in taking an active interest in the menus and quantity of waste food. Despite limited space, the school provides a relatively large hard play area that is designed for a number of games and apparatus for healthy exercise. The PE programme, both inside and outside the school, is strong and there are regular supervised visits to the local park. Although the number

of responses by pupils to the questionnaire was small, the overwhelming majority of these were very supportive of the school's provision.

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

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

- 5.1 Governance is satisfactory. The proprietor oversees the whole school's strategic direction, secures its aims and values and supports its educational development, financial planning and investment in resources. It is aware of its responsibilities regarding welfare, health and safety throughout the school as a whole and provides officers to undertake regular checks at each site. It provides staff training and disseminates policies for child protection. However, prior to the initial visit some staff had been appointed without checks being properly completed, though this had been rectified by the time of the main visit. There is currently no direct involvement by representatives of Cognita with the staff, students or parents.
- 5.2 Regular meetings of the education board are held, in which decisions regarding the progress and improvement of the school as a whole are taken, and these decisions are promulgated effectively. A comprehensive development plan, prepared by the education board, with clear time-lines, cost implications and evaluation criteria sets out the strategic future development of the whole school in some detail. This plan is regularly monitored, reviewed and updated, though there are currently no arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the education board itself. The focus on teamwork and collaboration amongst the education board reflects the key elements of the IB Learner profile, enables the board to share a common vision for all three campuses and ensures that Southbank continues to excel as a happy, dynamic, and academically successful school.

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

- 5.3 The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, and support the school's aim to develop students who are internationally minded, independent, enthusiastic about life and learning and imbued with a sense of service to others.
- 5.4 The education board provide adequate overall leadership and management, which is common to all campuses of Southbank International School and deals with much of the everyday decision making which would normally be undertaken by the senior management team in a school. As a result of the PYP curriculum not being subject based the role of subject co-ordinator does not exist within the school, but curriculum chairs perform similar duties. Although the collegiate nature of the board provides effective long term planning it is not as effective in day-to-day management; in particular, at times it delays decision-making, leaving staff in a position of uncertainty. The small management team within the school is successful in overseeing the training of staff within the PYP and the delivery of the curriculum. The senior management team are effective in maintaining and developing the many links with parents.
- 5.5 This division of responsibilities appears to work well with each of the bodies concerned being aware of their individual and collective responsibilities because of their commitment to the IB principles of being open-minded communicators and thinkers who are balanced and reflective.

- 5.6 Overall leadership and management are generally effective in self-evaluation, and in setting priorities and ensuring they are achieved. However, the principal is not appraised. At the time of the initial visit, management at all levels had been successful in securing and motivating sufficient high quality staff, but they had not ensured the correct safeguarding procedures regarding staff appointments. By the time of the final visit this had been rectified, and there are now effective and thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and proprietors.

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

- 5.7 The school has excellent links with parents. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in developing the school's website and other electronic means of communication. A new prospectus has been produced and year books are annually compiled. At the end of each academic year a presentation of work is made by Year 6 pupils to their peers and parents
- 5.8 Parental response to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed strong satisfaction with the school and with the quality of education provided. Parents particularly approved of the teaching and support given to their children which helps students to make progress and develop positive attitudes and values. One parent said that: "I feel that my son is treated as an individual and gets support for his particular weaknesses as well as being recognised for his strengths". Another acknowledged that: "The inquiry-based learning has greatly benefited our older daughter ... who is fearless at attacking difficult and complex topics". However, one-fifth of respondents expressed concern regarding special educational needs. During the inspection EAL provision was found to be excellent. Some parents expressed concern about the LDD provision, but inspectors found that it was satisfactory except for the provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- 5.9 Opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school are wide. A strong Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) is involved in community building, facilitating both links between home and school and fund raising, and it meets frequently with the principal. Class support is encouraged with language skills and the Suzuki violin and cello method, and parents have provided assistance with multi-media projects.
- 5.10 Parents and guardians can arrange to visit the school and meet staff at any time, in addition to regular parent-teacher meetings. Since the previous inspection, the school has further improved the reports sent to parents. Twice-yearly reports contain considerable detail, but do not evaluate students' performance against one another or against national norms.
- 5.11 The school takes its communication with parents and carers seriously, and documentation for prospective parents is clear, copious and helpful. Much information is distributed by a weekly newsletter. At the start of each PYP unit, additional information is provided; this is accessible through the website and intranet.
- 5.12 The school's complaints policy is available in writing or on the website. The procedure is fully compliant with regulatory standards. There have been no formal complaints during the last two years, and the school has dealt with minor concerns promptly and effectively.

## **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 overall effectiveness of the EYFS is satisfactory. It fulfils its aim to promote independence by providing a wide range of choices and experiences enabling children to learn through inquiry. The uniqueness of individuals is recognised and children are adequately supported to ensure that they make sound progress. Children's welfare and individual needs are given high priority and correct adult to child ratios are maintained. The leadership team evaluates the provision to decide how it can be improved. Since the previous inspection, the classrooms have been extended and refurbished, and the outdoor area has been greatly improved with high-quality large play equipment and areas for growing plants.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are satisfactory and there is a determination to follow best practice. Policies and procedures are updated regularly to comply with current legislation, and risk assessments are carried out for all indoor and outdoor areas. Practitioners are committed to ensuring that children's welfare needs are met and that they are included in all activities. The EYFS assessment arrangements were incorrectly carried out last year and the grades were not reported to parents, but this error is in the process of being rectified for the present year. The parental questionnaire and subsequent conversations with parents indicate that they are very supportive of the school. Good use is made of high quality resources, both indoors and out.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is satisfactory with some good features. Learning and development are supported by using children's interests and natural curiosity as a starting point for planning their individual activities. Progress is carefully recorded in individual portfolios which contain photographic evidence and a few samples of work, observation notes and assessments. Adults have excellent knowledge of the PYP, but have insufficient knowledge of the EYFS and of the educational programmes that need to be followed in order to achieve the early learning goals by the age of five. Care is taken to safeguard all children, and their health and well-being are enhanced by the effective implementation of policies, practices and procedures.



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

- 6.4 Children make sound progress in their learning, though this is stronger in some areas than others. They are curious and have good investigational skills. For example, children enjoyed investigating why the ramps they had made collapsed when they cycled over them in one direction but remained firm from the other. They are articulate and enjoy talking about their work at gallery time. They are also creative, enjoy problem solving and demonstrate their understanding of the world in their play; for example, the children in the role play pet shop explained how much it would cost to feed their pet rabbit cabbage and carrots, and some of the girls explained why the mother goose had to sit on her eggs. Children understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle, but were not aware of the dangers they might encounter outside school because insufficient use is made of outside agencies. They are well behaved and relationships are strong. Children from a wide variety of cultures play and work together in harmony.

**What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## 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 the Education Board, 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 Terry Fawell

Mrs Lynn Maggs-Wellings

Mr Alistair Telfer

Mrs Valerie Goode

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, ISA school)

Early Years Lead Inspector