



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST FAITH'S SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Faith's School

Full Name of School	St Faith's School		
DfE Number	873/6002		
Registered Charity Number	311436		
Address	St Faith's School 6 Trumpington Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 8AG		
Telephone Number	01223 352073		
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Email Address	headsec@stfaiths.co.uk		
Head	Mr Stephen Drew		
Chair of Governors	Sir Anthony Brenton		
Age Range	4 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	536		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (333 boys; 203 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-13: 483
	3-5 (EYFS):	53	13-18: 0
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	536	
Number of Boarders	Total:	0	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Linda Smith		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	10 May 2011 to 11 May 2011		
	08 June 2011 to 10 June 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 April 2007.

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 St Faith's School was founded in 1884, as a boarding and day school for boys. Boarding ceased in 1995, and the school has accepted younger boys from the age of four since 1988. Girls were first admitted in 1995. The school was purchased by The Leys School in 1938, and is now part of The Leys and St Faith's Foundation. It operates fully autonomously although close educational links exist between St Faith's and its partner senior school. The Trustees of the Foundation have proprietorial responsibility for both schools, and day-to-day governance and oversight of St Faith's rest in the hands of the St Faith's Committee, all of whose members are Foundation Trustees. The school has occupied its current site, a series of former private houses on the south side of the city of Cambridge, since 1891. These buildings have been modernised and several others have been added over the years.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide for the talents, strengths, interests and needs of a wide variety of children. It seeks to offer a broad, inclusive and inspirational education through a diverse and stimulating curriculum and cherishing Christian environment, and to welcome children from all religious and cultural backgrounds. St Faith's aspires to offer a rounded education for children that provides well for academic success, social responsiveness, excellence in individual achievement, personal happiness and spiritual awareness.
- 1.3 The school educates 536 children (333 boys and 203 girls) between the ages of four and thirteen. The pre-preparatory department contains 125 children up to the age of seven, and includes Reception classes for 53 children as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils come from mainly professional and business families in and close to the city of Cambridge. Two pupils, who have Spanish as their first language, receive support for their English.
- 1.4 Pupils undertake a series of aptitude and ability tests in Years 4, 6 and 8. These indicate that the ability profile in the school from Year 4 is above the national average, but with a fairly wide spread of abilities. No child has a statement of special educational needs, but the school has identified 78 pupils who have varying degrees of learning difficulty. Of these, 59 receive specialist learning support.
- 1.5 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 St Faith's School is highly and conspicuously successful in meeting its stated aims, especially those aspiring to achieve high academic standards, and provide an inspiring education and a stimulating curriculum. The achievement of the pupils is excellent, and they make good, and often exceptional, progress over the long term. Those receiving learning support make similarly rapid progress. Pupils' subject knowledge is strong, and increases in depth and sophistication year by year. Their literacy, numeracy and technological skills are particularly good. The most able pupils perform at a high level in the many challenging extension activities. Recent national tests at ages seven and eleven have been good and excellent respectively. The pupils achieve considerable success within and beyond the school in the many extra-curricular opportunities open to them. Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. A major factor in the pupils' success is the broad and challenging curriculum, and the excellent quality of teaching that enables pupils of all ages and abilities to perform at their best.
- 2.2 At all ages, the pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils feel valued as individuals. They grow in confidence, take pride in their own and others' achievements, and have a strong sense of self-worth. They readily accept responsibility for themselves and others. Strong features of their development are the work they do to support a range of charities and their excellent environmental awareness. The pupils' well-being is enhanced by the outstanding pastoral care and support they receive from staff.
- 2.3 Governance is good with many strong features. Governors ensure that the school is faithful to its aims, and provide a high standard of education for the pupils. They work well with the school's leaders to set clear priorities for the school's continuing success. Leadership and management are excellent in almost all respects. The school has made excellent progress since the previous inspection, redefining senior staff roles and responsibilities more effectively. Excellent monitoring and evaluation of pastoral and academic areas of the school are carried out by senior staff, many of whom are highly stretched. The school has rectified a small number of cases where recruitment checks had not been completed promptly enough or recorded accurately and safeguarding is now thorough and effective. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed great satisfaction with the education provided by the school, especially the pastoral care, the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, and the subjects and activities available. A few expressed concerns about the burden of homework, the handling of complaints and the information provided about children's progress. Inspection evidence did not support these concerns.

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 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- require any employment supply agency to declare whether Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosures for staff appointed by them contain relevant information, and ensure that all checks are duly recorded in the central register of appointments [Part 4 paragraphs 20.(2)(a)(i)(cc), 20.(2)(d)(i), and 22.(5)(a)(i), under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors] and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7(b), under Welfare, health and safety];
 - ensure that checks of identity are carried out when staff recruited from an employment agency first start work in the school [Part 4, paragraph 20.(2)(c), under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];
 - ensure that all checks carried out on proprietors are promptly recorded in the central register of appointments [Part 4, paragraph 22.(6), under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Explore ways to release more time for key academic and pastoral leaders to reflect on their roles and share their experience more widely.
 2. Develop EYFS planning documents further to ensure that individual children's next steps in learning are fully identified.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Pupils' achievement overall is excellent, and they are very well educated in support of the school's aim to attain academic success and excellence in individual achievement. Their subject knowledge is strong, and increases in depth and sophistication year by year. This knowledge is applied well to new situations. Pupils' literacy is particularly good, and they can write accurately and at length, according to their age and ability. Speaking and listening skills are outstanding. Their numeracy is excellent, and they use number very well and apply it effectively in a range of subjects. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are excellent, and they use a variety of applications in many different situations to enhance their learning, such as in music composition, graph plotting and digital photography. By the time they leave, many pupils are able to analyse demanding prose and poetry very effectively, and manipulate complex arithmetical and algebraic functions.
- 3.2 Pupils show very good logical thinking and reasoning skills, from working out complex Latin constructions to linking cause and effect in science. They show excellent creative skills in English, art, design and technology, and music. Their independent thinking skills are strong, and they carry out research and investigation tasks with commitment and enthusiasm, showing themselves able to think on their feet. Pupils show conspicuous success outside the classroom in sport, music, drama, and in many external events, competitions and challenges, some at regional and national level. The most able pupils in all year groups enjoy being challenged and stimulated by the well-planned programme of extension activities, enabling them to achieve at levels well beyond those expected for their age. The great majority of leavers gain places at their first-choice senior schools, most of them through competitive academic entry, with some being awarded scholarships in recognition of their ability and talents.
- 3.3 National test results over recent years at the age of seven have been above the national average for maintained primary schools and, for those at the age of eleven, far above this national average. This level of attainment, and the achievements and successes of pupils already noted, indicate that they make particularly good long-term progress, and for some it is exceptional, compared with pupils of similar ability nationally. Pupils receiving learning support make similarly rapid progress, as shown by the improvement over time in their reading and mathematics test scores and in their writing.
- 3.4 Pupils show outstanding attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and hard-working, and clearly enjoy learning for its own sake. They are keen to find things out for themselves, and very willing to go well beyond the minimum required. Many derive considerable intellectual satisfaction from the work that they do. Pupils are co-operative and well behaved, and respond well when working in pairs, small groups and teams.

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

- 3.5 The curriculum and extra-curricular provision across the school are excellent. They contribute strongly to the pupils' success, and support the school's aim to provide an inspiring and inclusive education catering for different talents, strengths, interests and needs. The quality of the curricular provision has been strengthened since the previous inspection.
- 3.6 The well-planned curriculum is stimulating, broad and appropriately challenging for all ages and abilities. It includes good coverage of subjects, extending well beyond the National Curriculum. Core subjects, such as English, mathematics and science, are solidly represented throughout the school. Pupils confirm that they find the subjects offered interesting. A notable feature is the provision of Spanish for all pupils from Reception. By the time they leave, nearly all pupils study two modern foreign languages as well as Latin. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are plentiful. In a house assembly, Year 4 pupils performed in Spanish to the whole house group comprising pupils from Year 3 to Year 8. Specialist teaching and setting in different subjects provide the opportunity for work to be planned appropriately to suit all ability levels. The planning of the curriculum is highly responsive to pupils' needs.
- 3.7 A comprehensive programme of extension activities supplements the educational diet of the most able and talented pupils. These are well planned and give plenty of scope for such pupils to extend their knowledge and develop their skills in a demanding and stimulating programme of additional activities. The lunchtime discussion group includes many challenging philosophical topics, such as considering man's place in the cosmos. The provision for pupils requiring learning support or for those for whom English is an additional language is excellent and highly effective across the school. Learning support is carefully monitored and managed, and pupils' progress accurately assessed. Such pupils have specific individual programmes which are reviewed weekly. Pupils are supported very well, both in lessons and in the Discovery Zone (the learning support centre) depending on need.
- 3.8 Pupils are given many opportunities to carry out individual research for projects, and carry out stimulating problem-solving tasks and investigations within many subjects, such as geography, mathematics, English and science. ICT opportunities are widely included in the curriculum of almost every subject. The ICT suites and the library are well used to support pupils' learning. Curricular provision is well supported by excellent specialist facilities, such as the brand new sports hall and the technology workshop.
- 3.9 The course in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is particularly well planned and includes all year groups from the EYFS. It is very well regarded by the pupils who find it valuable and enjoy the opportunity to discuss various wide-ranging topics such as self-awareness, the workings of government, money issues and dealing with personal problems. Environmental awareness is strongly promoted throughout the curriculum.
- 3.10 An extremely wide range of enrichment activities and clubs is available to all pupils, including many sporting, musical and creative options, and there is a good level of involvement by pupils. These activities develop the children's self-confidence, teamwork and responsibility extremely well. Choices available range from street

dance and gardening to Ancient Greek and rowing. Visiting speakers support the enrichment programme and broaden the pupils' horizons and outlook on life. An extensive programme of visits also enriches the pupils' educational experience. These include residential trips to Italy and the Ardeche, as well as history and theatre trips nearer to home, and contact with the local community.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The overall quality of teaching across the school is excellent and fully supports the school's aspiration to build confidence, to stimulate interest in and to encourage enjoyment of the learning process. The teaching makes a very strong contribution to the pupils' progress and their excellent achievement. Opportunities for promoting individual thinking and learning and offering high levels of challenge were observed in many lessons and are a strength of the teaching.
- 3.12 Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils of all ages and ability. The teaching fosters enjoyment and enthusiasm, and enables all pupils to acquire a secure foundation of basic skills as well as increasing and developing their understanding. Teaching is very well planned and organised, building well on the knowledge of pupils' previous attainment, and their particular needs, circumstances and ways of learning. Carefully planned extension activities and tasks offer challenge to the more able as well as support for those with particular needs.
- 3.13 The best lessons observed moved at a brisk pace, using a stimulating and interesting range of tasks and activities, allowing pupils to take a leading role in the learning process. The teachers' use of well-focused, open-ended questions leads to lively and informed discussion in many lessons. Teachers use a wide range of different methods in the classroom to great effect, such as moving pupils around the classroom for different activities; encouraging pupils to evaluate and assess each other's work; increasing and decreasing the pace of the lesson in response to pupils' needs; using contemporary and everyday examples to provide richer and more stimulating illustration; and linking different subject areas together, such as classics and drama.
- 3.14 Excellent rapport and supportive relationships between teachers and their pupils are a key feature of the teaching. Teachers know their pupils very well, and understand the best ways to help them succeed. Very good use is made of resources to engage pupils, foster their interest, and help them to learn. For example, a Year 2 literacy lesson was enhanced when pupils used Victorian artefacts and enjoyed the experience of acting as curator of a museum. The internet and computer applications, such as stop-frame animation techniques, are used effectively to support teaching and learning for all pupils. In a small number of less successful lessons, the teaching did not fully engage all the pupils, and occasionally misjudged the time available, so that pupils were rushed through their tasks.
- 3.15 Marking of pupils' work is good, and is frequent and thorough. The best is highly encouraging and supportive, and identifies clear targets for improvement through evaluative comments and annotation. Although different subjects use their own marking procedures and methods, pupils understand the different systems in place and are aware of how well they are progressing. The school has collected a comprehensive body of assessment data which is very well used to track pupils' progress and to identify under-achievers. The use of homework contributes well to pupils' learning, achievement and progress.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 From the EYFS onwards, pupils' personal development is excellent. They display outstanding levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. This is a real strength of the school, and supports its aim to offer a rounded education for children that provides well for academic success, social responsiveness, excellence in individual achievement, personal happiness and spiritual awareness. Pupils feel valued and cherished as individuals, grow in confidence, and take pride in their own and others' achievements. They recognise that they are fortunate to be in the school, and are appreciative of the many opportunities given to them.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent and very well developed through the curriculum, school and house assemblies, and extensive charity work, within a Christian environment which values diversity in society and welcomes those from all religions and cultural backgrounds. Pupils show great tolerance and respect for each other, and a responsibility towards other people. Throughout their time at the school pupils develop their self-esteem and confidence, recognising their own strengths and weaknesses. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to them to reflect on a range of issues, such as the nature of meditation and the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism. Year 8 pupils wrote moving poems on war and the nature of love. They are aware of how values and beliefs affect people's lives. Pupils' spiritual development is also evident through art, music and drama.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral awareness is of a very high standard. They appreciate and understand the standards of behaviour expected of them in lessons and around the school. They are aware that their actions have consequences and may affect the rights and needs of others. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong, and respect their environment and other people's feelings. Older pupils consider moral and ethical dilemmas, such as going to war, the need to promote Fair Trade goods in the tuck shop, and the issues surrounding nuclear power generation.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is outstanding. Throughout the school, pupils respond very well to many opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others. Pupils may be toy monitors in the pre-prep, 'form experts' in Year 3, or 'eco reps', helping to raise environmental awareness. Year 8 prefects, team and house captains, and school council representatives exert their authority sensibly and productively. The 'buddy' system', whereby senior pupils are linked with those who are younger through a series of games, activities and support, is highly valued by young and old alike. Pupils identify with and strongly support many charity fund-raising events, through form, house and whole-school activities, both locally and abroad. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the school's relationship with its South African partner school.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent and enhanced by their knowledge of and enthusiastic engagement with art, music and literature. A range of valuable overseas visits and partnerships with external organisations all extend the pupils' awareness, tolerance and understanding of the global environment which they will help to shape. Many subjects help them to appreciate racial and cultural issues, as does the diverse school community in which they are learning. Visits to local theatres, museums, concert halls and galleries help pupils to appreciate their own Western European culture and heritage. Mock elections, visits to the Houses of

Parliament and visiting MPs help pupils to learn about the democratic process in action.

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

- 4.6 Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils throughout the school are good, with many excellent aspects, and support strongly the school's aim for children to be safe in the knowledge that there are always people who will help them, to be secure in the company of staff and peers who treat them with respect and friendship, and to be happy to come to school every day.
- 4.7 The pastoral support for pupils is outstanding and is a major strength of the school. Central to this are the highly effective tutor and house systems. Tutors know their tutees very well and work hard to give them the highest standards of support, both pastoral and academic. This excellent pastoral care benefits significantly from efficient consultation and successful sharing of information among staff. Through tutor periods, house assemblies and competitions, and the teaching of some subjects in house groups, the pupils feel a strong sense of identity with their houses. The school counsellor is accessible to both pupils and parents alike.
- 4.8 Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and an atmosphere of mutual respect and support prevails throughout the school. Pupils are supportive of one another and exhibit obvious pleasure at the achievements of their peers. The responses to the pre-inspection pupils' questionnaire indicate strongly that they feel they make good progress in their work, that they benefit from a wide range of activities, are encouraged to do things for themselves, and are helped to learn by their teachers. Overwhelmingly, they stated that they enjoy being at the school.
- 4.9 Comprehensive policies to safeguard pupils' welfare, promote good behaviour and prevent bullying have appropriate regard to official guidance and are effectively implemented. All required child protection training for staff has been carried out. Day-to-day safeguarding arrangements are generally excellent, and a small number of past failures to complete promptly and record some staff recruitment checks have been rectified. The pastoral concerns register is thorough and well used. Good behaviour is promoted throughout the school through the use of awards such as house points, stickers, Star of the Week certificates, commendations and colours. Regular surveys to monitor bullying and other behavioural concerns are carried out and used well. Pupils report that on the rare occasions when relationships break down, they are thoroughly resolved by staff. Sanctions used when staff have concerns about behaviour focus on the need for pupils to reflect on the consequences of their actions.
- 4.10 Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety and minimise risks from fire are very thorough and well documented. Medical care is very good, and the deputy head meets weekly with the nurses to discuss individual children. Food at lunch time is varied and plentiful, although monitoring of the choices pupils make, and the amount they drink, is not always fully effective. The promotion of healthy eating initiatives is not overtly widespread around the school. Pupils have many opportunities to exercise during the breaks, lunchtimes and clubs and also before school on the tennis courts and playing field. The school has an effective plan for improving educational access for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good in nearly all respects, and has many strong features. The St Faith's committee governors, in particular, provide excellent support for the school and highly effective oversight of its life and work. They ensure that the school is faithful to its central mission and purpose and enable a high standard of education to be provided for the pupils. As proprietors, with the other Foundation governors, they discharge their responsibilities conscientiously, especially for health and safety. However, their monitoring of some areas of regulatory compliance has not always been fully efficient.
- 5.2 St Faith's governors know the school very well and have excellent systems for understanding how it runs, together with its strengths and areas for development. They are clear about the school's successes and future needs and, with senior staff, set clear strategic and operational priorities. Each governor is linked with a member of the senior management team to monitor progress of a specific section of the operational plan. Their control of financial matters and oversight of resource provision is well planned and efficient. They hold the school appropriately to account by vigorous discussion and debate during their meetings, at which reports and presentations from the school are received.
- 5.3 Governors take their statutory responsibilities seriously, and carry out thorough reviews of the effectiveness of the school's child protection and health and safety arrangements, although a few omissions have not been identified promptly enough in the past. A small number of failures to record accurately the recruitment checks on new governors have now been rectified.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The leadership and management throughout the school are excellent in almost all respects. They fully support the school's aims to provide a broad, inclusive and inspirational education, and they provide the stimulus that enables pupils to achieve high standards and outstanding personal development. However, full regulatory compliance has not been achieved in the recent past, although the few earlier failures have now been rectified. The school has made excellent progress since the previous inspection in 2007, redefining senior staff roles and responsibilities and achieving a much stronger focus on the evaluation of the school's life and work.
- 5.5 A very strong sense of purpose and commitment to high standards are evident throughout the school, and this derives from the strong and child-centred leadership of the most senior staff. The headmaster promotes his vision for the school with clarity and sensitivity, enabling staff at all levels to feel involved and contribute to the school's success.
- 5.6 The operational plan is closely linked to the furtherance of the school's aims, and provides a highly effective catalyst for the school's development and improvement. Progress is continually monitored and priorities updated by the school's senior management team, together with governors. A strong culture of self-evaluation and positive self-criticism is evident within the school. The academic pulse of the school is stimulated and sustained by the director of studies and heads of department through a wide range of strategies, including the sharing of good classroom practice,

monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, the work of the curriculum committee, and the academic concerns meetings. Oversight of pastoral issues is equally strong, and promoted very effectively by regular meetings and consultation between the deputy head and the heads of houses and head of pre-prep, together with their teams of tutors. However, maintenance of these high standards, which benefit pupils so well, places a heavy burden on these highly committed and stretched key senior and middle managers. The pastoral support register, and the child protection and health and safety committees enable pupils' welfare and well-being to be continuously monitored and evaluated. The school's commitment to provide a highly child-centred education is very well met through these processes and systems.

- 5.7 The hard-working staff at all levels are fully involved in maintaining the high standard of education provided. Through the appraisal system, their professional strengths and needs are identified and their contributions to their academic and pastoral roles are recognised. Staff have access to an appropriate range of training and professional development opportunities. All have received necessary child protection and health and safety training and guidance. Staff have all received clearance through the CRB on appointment. A very small number of past failures to carry out promptly and record the results of some other recruitment checks have been rectified since the initial visit.

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

- 5.8 The quality of the school's links with its parent body is excellent, and the school maintains a very positive relationship and partnership with parents in accordance with its aims. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were extremely happy with the school's provision for their children. They were particularly pleased with the quality of pastoral care, the school's promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values, and the range of subjects, experiences and extra-curricular activities on offer. A small but significant minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the quantity of homework set, the school's handling of concerns raised, and the progress made by their children. Inspection evidence and findings found no grounds to support these claims. A small minority of parents also raised concerns about the lack of information given about their child's progress. End of term reports provide some quantitative information about attainment and progress, and include a detailed commentary about achievement.
- 5.9 Parents are made to feel very welcome at the school and have plenty of opportunities to become involved. Some attend the daily family breakfast in school; others help with trips and other events, or are involved in activities such as running the clothes shop. The active parents' association makes a valuable contribution to the school by organising a variety of fundraising and social events. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their children's work and progress: parents' evenings, 'drop in' surgeries with tutors twice each term, and informal and formal meetings on pastoral and curriculum issues throughout the school year are well supported. The Early Start and Late Stay provision is very helpful to many parents.
- 5.10 Efficient and regular communication with parents is achieved in a variety of ways. Parents feel that information about the school is readily available to them and find communication with the school easy. An excellent range of written material is made available to parents, much of it electronically. Parents have easy access to school policies via the school website, and the weekly newsletter and parents' handbook also provide good lines of communication. The parents' website portal now allows

them to access their child's timetable, awards and commendations and assessment information online. Parents are provided with detailed reports twice each year which generally contain clear and helpful targets for improvement.

- 5.11 The school deals with any complaints sensitively and efficiently. The tutor is the first point of contact if a parent has a concern and an efficient system is in place for dealing with such matters. Parents' views are canvassed through satisfaction surveys, response slips with reports, entry and exit surveys, and informal discussions and meetings with staff.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

6.1 The effectiveness of the setting is outstanding and fulfils the school's aims to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest standards of achievement. Excellent, supportive teaching nurtures and directs children, encouraging independence and an enquiring mind. The staff promote confidence and an eagerness to learn. All children are valued as individuals and their needs are met extremely effectively. Children's personal development is excellent. The school's development planning and clear educational direction display a real commitment to continuing improvement.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Provision for children's safeguarding and welfare is excellent with extreme care taken to ensure that children learn in a safe and secure environment. All required recruitment checks for EYFS staff have been properly carried out and recorded. The head of the pre-preparatory section and her well-qualified team have a strong sense of purpose and an ambition for excellence. Efficient records, policies and procedures support the management of the setting effectively, promoting equality of opportunity for all. Parents are involved well in their children's learning. They are extremely supportive and value the excellent pastoral care provided and the nurturing and happy environment. Effective links with external agencies offer valued support for staff. An excellent range of high-quality resources promotes plentiful opportunities for independent learning, both indoors and outside.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. Staff lead by example and provide strong support, which results in the children's excellent personal development and positive attitudes to learning. Detailed, collaborative planning ensures that the staff can respond to and meet individual children's needs. The outdoor environment is accessible and used extremely well to promote learning. Rigorous risk assessments and regular checks ensure a safe environment. The curriculum is well balanced and enhanced by specialist teaching in music and Spanish. ICT resources are good, and are used effectively by children to record their achievements. Parents are invited into school to share their knowledge or expertise with the children. Initial and on-going assessments of children help teachers plan lessons and activities, although the next steps in children's learning are not always identified and recorded fully.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy learning and have high levels of achievement. By the end of the Reception year, most have attained the early learning goals in all six areas and many have exceeded them. Most children can recognise and use numbers to twenty and show a good understanding of number bonds. They read at a level that exceeds expectations for their age and use their phonics skills well to write independently. They are inquisitive and show an increasing knowledge of the world, for example when talking about tadpoles and their life cycle. Their personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary. Children respond positively to adults and speak confidently to their teachers and their peers. They understand about keeping safe and the importance of healthy eating and hygiene. They form happy friendships and are courteous and considerate of each other.

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 three governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, tutor periods 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 Timothy Holgate	Reporting Inspector
Mr Gordon Ferguson	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Niki Gan	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Sarah Graham	Head, IAPS school
Mr Ian Raybould	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Joan Fearn	Early Years Coordinating Inspector