



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**STAMFORD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Stamford Junior School

Stamford School and Stamford High School were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of School	<b>Stamford Junior School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>925/6045</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>527618</b>		
Address	<b>Stamford Junior School Kettering Road Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 2LR</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01780 484400</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01780 484401</b>		
Email Address	<b>headjs@ses.links.sch.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Miss Elizabeth Craig</b>		
Principal	<b>Mr Stephen Roberts</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Malcolm Desforges</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>353</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (174 boys; 179 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>67</b>	5-11: <b>286</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>341</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>25</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>12</b>	
	Full:	<b>6</b>	Weekly: <b>6</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>20 Sep 2011 to 21 Sep 2011</b>		
	<b>17 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in December 2009 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features

- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Stamford Junior School is a day and boarding school for girls and boys between the ages of three and eleven. It is one of the constituent schools of the Stamford Endowed Schools foundation, which also includes Stamford High School for girls and Stamford School for boys, both senior schools. The three schools, each with its own head, work in close collaboration for a common purpose, and are overseen by a single governing body and principal. Stamford Junior School was created in 2002 through the amalgamation of the junior sections of the two senior schools, and became fully co-educational in 2003. The school serves a wide area, covering a 25-mile radius, although a number of day and boarding pupils live locally. The school has a Christian foundation but welcomes pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds irrespective of their personal beliefs. Since the last inspection there has been a change of principal. The foundation has recently become an incorporated charity.
- 1.2 The three schools share common aims: to create a happy, exciting and supportive environment in which learning is the priority and where young people are inspired to achieve their best in all aspects of school life; to develop pupils' intellectual curiosity; for pupils to have a caring and respectful attitude towards each member of the schools' diverse and welcoming community; for pupils to perceive no obstacle in life as insurmountable and to exceed expectations in whatever they do.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there were 353 pupils on roll: 174 boys and 179 girls. Twelve pupils board, of whom six are full boarders and six are weekly boarders. Pupils come from a broad mix. Children in the Nursery have an automatic offer of a place in Reception classes; entry into Years 1 to 6 is by academic assessment, during a day in school, and a report from a pupil's previous school.
- 1.4 Standardised tests show that the ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most pupils from Year 3 upwards having an ability that is at least average, and a few pupils being of below average ability. The school has identified 60 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 32 receive specialist support. Twenty pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), of whom two receive additional support with English. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- 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 From the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) onwards, pupils are extremely well educated in accordance with the school's aims and their overall achievement is outstanding. Pupils learn well, developing a wide range of skills, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT). In standardised tests, pupils attain well and their progress is excellent. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and to their involvement in activities outside the classroom. They benefit from an excellent curriculum which is well structured to meet the needs of all. It provides progressively more difficult work and promotes excellent standards. Pupils' achievements are particularly notable in literacy, numeracy, investigative work, sport and music. Pupils of all abilities and needs make outstanding progress in their learning. As a result, they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Their success is promoted by excellent teaching, and a feeling of mutual trust pervades the school.
- 2.2 The provision made for the pupils' pastoral care, welfare, health and safety is outstanding and contributes strongly to their excellent personal development and the high standards they achieve. Pupils have well-developed knowledge of faiths, and the outstanding quality of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness reflects the strong sense of community in the school. Teachers know their pupils well and are committed to the welfare of all in their care. Pupils are highly positive about the school and the way in which it cares for them, reflected in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. Governors are well informed and discharge their responsibilities to ensure that the school's aims and all statutory requirements are met. They successfully oversee the work of the school and provide the management with excellent support. The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Clear policies and procedures contribute to the smooth running of the school. The school promotes extremely successful links with parents, who responded positively to all aspects of school life in the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspection findings support these comments.

## **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) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Increase the amount of time set aside from teaching for subject co-ordinators, including in the EYFS, to develop their areas further.



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

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

- 3.1 Throughout the school, the pupils' overall achievement is outstanding, with excellent standards in academic work and in extra-curricular activities. This fulfils the school's aim to create a happy, exciting and supportive environment in which learning is the priority and where young people are inspired to achieve their best in all aspects of school life.
- 3.2 In lessons and in their written work, pupils show excellent knowledge and understanding. Pupils of all ages speak, listen, read and write competently for a wide range of purposes. They are confident and articulate speakers who show respect for the views of others. Their reading skills are excellent. Pupils write well and some outstanding work is on display, both in the classrooms and in the corridors. Around the school there are many examples of excellent artwork from pupils of all year groups, including in the EYFS, covering a wide range of topics. Pupils have highly developed mathematical skills and use them appropriately in other subjects. They use ICT confidently and competently, both as a discrete subject and across the curriculum, and this contributes to their learning and achievement. They are creative and have highly developed physical skills. Their music making is outstanding; in a music lesson older pupils demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of rhythm when they produced a compound beat together whilst playing a set of djembe drums. There are many opportunities for logical and independent thinking throughout the school week. This was evident in the paired learning sessions between two year groups, where older pupils worked with younger pupils in their understanding of two-dimensional shape. All pupils were enthusiastic and worked extremely well together, and thoroughly enjoyed the activity. In the last ten years, pupils have been entered for a national mathematics challenge and have achieved a good number of bronze, silver and gold awards annually.
- 3.3 The pupils are very successful in a range of drama and music examinations. Music has a strong presence in the school; the Year 2 string project feeds into the junior orchestra, quartets, jazz band, fiddle band and choirs. Pupils perform on a regular basis each term. Joint concerts are also held with the two senior schools. The excellent breadth of repertoire includes church music, classical and popular music. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting fixtures against local maintained and independent schools. They have enjoyed considerable success in regional competitions, with the Under 11 boys' hockey team, the gymnastic team and the swimming team all reaching the national finals. Athletics success is also strong.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but on the evidence available, including standardised data, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-expected expectations. This was confirmed by the excellent progress seen in work during the inspection. There is excellent support for a range of learning needs, including those of pupils with SEND

and those who are gifted and talented. Pupils with SEND achieve results commensurate with their ability due to early intervention and extremely effective support both in and outside the classroom.

- 3.5 The pupils' excellent attainment and progress are supported by their positive attitudes to learning and their creative and enquiring minds, evident in many lessons and activities. A collaborative approach to learning is strongly nurtured and many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop strong personal skills by working in pairs and small groups, taking responsibility for decision making and undertaking their own research. Pupils always strive to do their best, and this is reflected in their high levels of success in entry to the senior schools and to other selective independent and maintained schools at the end of Year 6. They have an excellent work ethic and their behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.

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

- 3.6 Throughout the school the curriculum is excellent, meeting the aim for pupils to perceive no obstacle in life as insurmountable and to exceed expectations in whatever they do. The wide and varied curriculum is appropriate for pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND or EAL. It covers all requisite areas of learning and makes a substantial contribution to pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It is enriched by the introduction of modern foreign languages, and all pupils in Year 2 are taught to play stringed instruments to enhance their musical ability. From the EYFS onwards, the teaching of core skills is rigorous and the pupils build on these secure foundations. The whole-school emphasis on developing pupils' confidence has led to their exemplary attitudes to learning and high levels of basic skills.
- 3.7 Creative, expressive and practical subjects have a strong place in the curriculum. Logical thought in science is excellent and pupils engage with enthusiasm in scientific investigation. Technological skills are developed through design and technology and ICT. Since the last inspection, ICT facilities have been expanded and now include wireless laptops, microphones, electronic keyboards and data loggers, which all enhance pupils' technological skills. Humanities are catered for in history, geography and religious education (RE). Physical development is supported extremely well through the strong provision of physical education and games, including swimming at all stages. The arts provide many opportunities for creative and aesthetic development. The curriculum is further enhanced by the introduction of philosophy for children. The excellent innovation of holding week-long topic-based activities in mathematics, English and science across the school enable the pupils to experience teamwork across year groups and to appreciate a common thread within the subjects, and how their qualities merge to produce life skills.
- 3.8 The excellent programme of personal, social, health and community education (PSHCE) for all ages extends the curriculum to cover many areas of personal development, supported by the pastoral team. The pupils benefit from the high

quality of specialist teaching accommodation, such as the art room, music room, library, ICT suite and facilities for sport, including the on-site swimming pool.

- 3.9 The school provides outstanding individual attention to pupils of all abilities to assist them in their learning. The teaching and curriculum fully address the need for a balance of different learning styles. The programme of Independent Learning and Intellectual Curiosity (ILIC) has stimulated and encouraged higher thinking skills throughout the school, including the EYFS.
- 3.10 The extensive programme of extra-curricular activities is excellent. From Reception to Year 6 it encompasses many sport activities, including gymnastics, and a vast array of music ensembles. The wide range of educational visits for all year groups includes trips to a local centre for a history day and a 'mini-beast' hunt, local churches, chapels, a Hindu centre, and a local farm and sea-life centre. Extensive use is made of the facilities at nearby Burghley House for pursuits including the inter-house running competition and a Tudor activity day for Year 5. Residential trips take place from Year 3, including camping overnight and enjoying activities in the extensive grounds of the school, and visits to the Oxford area, the Peak District and Wales. These trips provide opportunities to learn life skills such as independence, initiative, teamwork, problem solving, perseverance and leadership. They also enhance relationships within year groups.
- 3.11 Pupils benefit from many links with the local community and the school participates in local activities such as music and drama festivals and sporting events.

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

- 3.12 The overall quality of teaching is excellent and fully supports the aims of the school. It enables all pupils to make significant progress and to give of their best. The teachers know their pupils well and this, in conjunction with their strong subject knowledge, makes a great contribution to the progress the pupils make. In the best lessons teaching is energetic, enthusiastic and well paced, and it encourages application and progress. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, who are confident to seek help when they need it. This level of support is appreciated by both pupils and their parents.
- 3.13 Lessons are well planned and build on previously learned knowledge. Discussion plays a large part and this stimulates speaking and listening skills. Most lessons conclude with a plenary session, when teachers and pupils discuss whether learning objectives have been met.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, teaching provides a secure foundation in basic skills for all pupils, enhances their understanding and challenges their thinking. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils are motivated by their learning. Teachers have a comprehensive awareness of pupils' individual learning needs. They provide support for those experiencing difficulty and additional challenge for the most able. The greater use of ICT since the previous inspection has enabled pupils to develop and apply their skills across the curriculum. In lessons, ICT is employed well to

promote learning and pupils use it confidently. Pupils are enthusiastic about the banks of netbooks, which are an excellent, well-used resource.

- 3.15 Teachers are well qualified and share their appreciation of their subjects with their pupils. Weekly curriculum development meetings, sharing ideas, and new initiatives and lesson observations, have enhanced teaching and thus pupils' independent learning. Resources are used effectively to support teaching and learning. The pupils benefit from excellent coaching in the performing arts and games. Pupils are regularly given opportunities to explore their own ideas, for example within the ILIC course.
- 3.16 The quality of marking is excellent, and it is regular and helpful. The best marking shows clear targets for improvement, and is encouraging and supportive. Assessment is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Particularly good use of question and answer techniques during lessons is highly effective in monitoring their progress and setting targets. Pupils learn what they need to do to improve and respond enthusiastically to their new targets.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, including those in the EYFS. They are confident, friendly, polite and welcoming. In accordance with the school's aims, the pupils display a strong sense of purpose and individuals are valued for their contribution to the community. Their behaviour is exemplary and attendance excellent.
- 4.2 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils of all ages are self-confident and able to discuss religious beliefs, including faiths other than their own, with respect and understanding. They benefit from school assemblies and house meetings, and enjoy sharing in the spiritual and cultural richness of the school. The pupils have opportunities to participate in musical and drama productions and this enhances their sense of awe and wonder. During RE lessons, the pupils reflect and explore their feelings and emotions, and develop values and principles to widen their perspective of life.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They show enthusiasm when taking responsibility for their actions and are guided by a shared code of conduct. They acquire a clear understanding of what is right and wrong, and fully understand the code and its high expectations of courtesy, kindness and concern for others.
- 4.4 Pupils interact with each other with mutual respect, showing outstanding social development. They are extremely caring and considerate towards others. They develop excellent co-operative skills from an early age, working together in class activities and taking responsibility in their roles as monitors, prefects, house captains and school council members. The PSHCE programme provides pupils with an excellent understanding of public institutions and services in England, and by Year 6, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Pupils, staff and parents assist with charities locally, nationally and internationally, and raise considerable funds.
- 4.5 Pupils show a mature awareness of a variety of cultures, faiths and backgrounds. Cultural differences are readily appreciated and pupils learn about alternative traditions, as observed in a lesson on Divali. Pupils happily share their personal experiences, and parents and speakers visit to enable a deeper understanding of a variety of beliefs. A sense of harmony pervades the school community.

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

- 4.6 Arrangements for pastoral care, welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The school is, in all aspects, supportive of the well-being of the pupils and ensures care of the highest quality, and this is much appreciated by parents. All policies to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are in place.
- 4.7 The excellent support and guidance provided by all staff promote the personal development and academic achievements of all pupils very well. Relationships between the staff, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent; staff know their pupils very well. Information about pupils is disseminated well both formally and informally amongst staff. Consequently, pupils are happy, confident and relaxed. They are well motivated and enjoy school life.
- 4.8 The pupils confidently state that they can turn to the staff for help in the event of any concern, and pupils agree that bullying is rare. The school has effective policies and procedures to promote good behaviour, to guard against any harassment and bullying, and to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is exemplary. In both their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussion, pupils of all ages said that they feel teachers are genuinely concerned for their well-being.
- 4.9 Due attention is given to safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare. The safeguarding policy is clear, meets requirements and is implemented successfully; all staff receive appropriate checks and training. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Risk assessments cover all aspects of school life. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are excellent, including comfortable provision for pupils who are ill. The school has an appropriate plan to improve provision for pupils with SEND. Accidents are suitably recorded, as is the administration of medicines.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily; the school has an environmental health award for its enhanced provision for healthy eating. Pupils of all ages take adequate exercise, both in and out of doors. In lessons and in free time, pupils enjoy their participation in sporting activities. The admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.11 The quality of boarding is excellent. The caring pastoral principles which underpin the school as a whole are reflected in the provision of boarding. The boarding house has become the focal point for the care of pupils outside the school day, which enhances further the school's family feel.
- 4.12 Relationships are positive. Pupils have considerable confidence in the boarding staff. Boarders are happy and well looked after, and enjoy the boarding experience. The values of friendship and fellowship pervade the boarding house. Pupils understand that there are adults who can help them if necessary and feel that any difficulties are quickly resolved in a positive and helpful way by house staff. Pupils have the opportunity to telephone home or speak to their siblings in the senior schools. They are involved in events such as Harvest Supper and a firework display arranged by the parents' association. Themed weekends are open to members of the school who are not boarders and these are popular and well attended. On Sundays, the whole boarding community of the foundation meets in chapel and has lunch together, and junior school pupils, including boarders, lead a service once each term.
- 4.13 Well-established routines provide excellent opportunities for the boarders to participate in a wide range of activities, which they say are fun and enjoyable. There is a variety of boarding arrangements, including full boarding, five nights, three nights and flexi-boarding, tailored to meet the needs of pupils and their families. Homework is supervised and boarders receive good support with their studies in the evening. All boarders belong to a cub pack which provides opportunities for camping and visits to places of interest. Each term outings take place further afield, such as to London or a safari park. Boarders also enjoy opportunities for cooking, as well as duties that range from a wake up call to feeding the terrapins.
- 4.14 The boarding accommodation is excellent. The dormitories are bright, well decorated and homely. Boarders bring personal items to decorate their surroundings. The common rooms are well used and include a good variety of equipment and activities enjoyed by boarders. Regular use of the swimming pool and the sports hall is popular and opportunities for outdoor play are excellent. Boarders enjoy a healthy and nutritious lunch with day pupils in the dining room. Routines for breakfast, tea and supper are clear and orderly. Pupils are able to make requests for specific food items and speak highly of the catering, which is based in the boarding house and contributes strongly to its homely feel. Boarders are very proud of their boarding house and aware of the opportunities the boarding experience offers for personal development and responsibility.

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

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

- 5.1 Excellent governance successfully ensures that the school's aims are met, and it fully supports the high standards of pupils' achievement and personal development. The governors are highly committed to the ongoing success and future development of the three schools in the foundation. In August 2010 the schools became an incorporated charity with a single corporate trustee. The board consists of 16 governors, including parents of former pupils, and a wide range of relevant expertise. They work closely with the principal and the heads of the three foundation schools, providing excellent oversight of the schools' work. There is a strong strategic vision for the future development of the school and for financial planning. Governors have been instrumental in ensuring that the accommodation and resources necessary to meet the needs of the curriculum are of the highest standard. The four governance committees have clear remits and provide an efficient and effective focus, both for review of current practice and for future and strategic thinking.
- 5.2 The governors' fulfilment of their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety is also highly effective, ensuring that practice in the school reflects policy. Members of the board are well informed about the school's work through reports from the head and regular visits to the school by the two designated governors. The governors visit the school frequently to attend events and meet socially with staff.

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

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management is outstanding throughout the school. It enables the school to fully achieve its aims.
- 5.4 The strong leadership and high level of support from senior management help to provide clear goals and an effective sense of direction, ensuring that all pupils receive the highest quality of education to equip them for their next schools. The senior team and subject co-ordinators monitor the schemes of work and evaluate the delivery of the curriculum by examining pupils' work and carrying out peer observation. The school is aware of the need to create more time for them to carry out this role. The head attends governors' meetings, and regularly meets with the principal and heads of the other schools within the foundation.
- 5.5 The school development plan shows a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff are involved in planning, and the school's clear vision is reflected in the high quality of the pupils' achievement and personal development. Links with the local authority are excellent. Whole-school policies, and their implementation, are reviewed regularly.
- 5.6 The school has effective systems for securing, inducting and supporting high quality staff who have a range of expertise and experience. Recruitment procedures are



secure, and all staff and governors are suitably checked. Excellent appraisal and in-service training ensure progressive staff development, and all staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The central register of appointments is accurately maintained.

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

- 5.7 Links between the school and parents are excellent and strongly support pupils' education. The shared aspirations and pride in the school amongst pupils, parents and staff help the school to achieve its aims. Open communication is encouraged with all staff. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated very strong support for the school, and high degrees of satisfaction with all aspects of its provision. Parents appreciate the help and guidance afforded to their children and the attitudes and values promoted by the school. No items of concern were raised by the vast majority of parents.
- 5.8 Parents value the high quality of communication. Development of the website has significantly improved contact with parents, as has the introduction of electronic communication. There is a weekly podcast, frequent question and answer sessions with the head and a highly successful parents' association. Parents have frequent and regular opportunities to meet staff in order to discuss their children's achievement and progress. The school's clear open-door policy ensures that parents have prompt access to a member of staff. Parents are provided with helpful written reports three times a year and two parents' evenings. Parents' evenings provide good opportunities for discussion and appointments are easily made where necessary.
- 5.9 Parents are provided with many opportunities to be involved in the school. The school handles their concerns with care and follows its published procedures.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

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

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding, both in meeting the needs of the children and in achieving its aim of giving them the opportunity to develop personally, socially and emotionally, physically, aesthetically and intellectually. Children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. Since the previous inspection, significant improvements have been made, including a new purpose-built Nursery building, and with regard to the outdoor play provision and the development of independent learning for all children. Staff are highly effective practitioners who sustain existing high standards by identifying areas for improvement.

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

6.2 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. A clear direction is set for development within the EYFS, and a strong focus is placed on the well-being of each child. However, there is not, at present, sufficient management time to fully monitor and support colleagues. Safeguarding of the children is excellent: staff are well trained in their roles, they all hold paediatric first-aid certificates, and detailed effective policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis to ensure that outings, equipment and accommodation are safe for the children. Assessment through observation is rigorous and is used effectively to guide planning and target next steps for the children. Strong links with external agencies, including the local authority, offer valued support for staff, who work together as a happy, caring and effective team. Excellent home-school links have been established and parents' views are constantly sought and, where appropriate, acted upon. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the setting and are most appreciative of all that it provides. Throughout the setting, resources are used and managed well to support learning.

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

- 6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. The staff's thorough understanding of the EYFS framework ensures that they are confident in helping children to learn. The curriculum is well balanced and enhanced by high quality specialist teaching in French, swimming and ballet. Comprehensive planning, based on careful assessment of children's needs, ensures that, irrespective of ability, all children achieve and develop well. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff promote the welfare and safety of all children and the well-operated, orderly routines create an atmosphere in which children feel secure and thrive. The highly stimulating outdoor environment gives children first-hand experience of weather and the natural world. Constant free flow between the indoors and outdoors is made possible by excellent staff-child ratios and the effective design of the EYFS accommodation.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children in the EYFS are outstanding. Children respond well to the high expectations of the staff and they are beginning to develop skills for the future, making excellent progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all areas. They are confident and independent learners who have excellent relationships with both staff and each other, and they respond to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. By the end of the Nursery year, children know some of their letters and initial sounds, match objects to numerals, use mathematical language in play and count confidently up to ten or above. They use a range of materials well in creative activities and gain much enjoyment from their wildlife and vegetable gardens. By the end of Reception, children read well, write sentences using simple punctuation, recognise and write numbers up to 20, add and subtract competently and solve simple mathematical problems. They enjoy role play and creative work. All children play games confidently on the interactive whiteboards and use digital cameras to record their activities. Children benefit from regular exercise and develop an awareness of healthy eating, hygiene and keeping themselves safe.

**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 chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Karin Kelly

Mr John Greathead

Mr Jonathan Meadmore

Mrs Lynda Sharpe

Reporting Inspector

Headmaster, IAPS school

Former Headmaster, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector