



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**SUTTON HIGH SCHOOL GDST**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Sutton High School GDST

Full Name of School	<b>Sutton High School GDST</b>		
DfE Number	<b>319/6069</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1026057</b>		
Address	<b>Sutton High School GDST 55 Cheam Road Sutton Surrey SM1 2AX</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 86420594</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 86422014</b>		
Email Address	<b>office@sut.gdst.net</b>		
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Bronwen Goulding</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Anne Pearcey</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>708</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>245</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>45</b>	11-18: <b>418</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>708</b>	
EYFS Gender	<b>Girls</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011</b> <b>16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 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 November 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 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 Sutton High School is a day school for girls situated near the centre of Sutton in Surrey. The school was opened in 1884 and is a member of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) whose aim is to provide an outstanding education and help girls to develop into rounded, confident people, happy and resilient, who can meet and overcome the demands life will make on them. In addition, the aim of the school is to provide an academically rigorous and challenging education for girls within the framework of a caring and supportive community. While the Council of the GDST has overall responsibility for the school, a separate body of governors is a source of advice and support at local level.
- 1.2 A new headmistress was appointed in September 2011 and since the previous inspection in November 2005 the school has extended its provision to admit three year old pupils. There has also been a programme of building and refurbishment to include a new dance studio, food technology room, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and a relocation of classrooms to allow the junior school to expand.
- 1.3 The school caters for 708 girls aged three to eighteen. There are 290 in the junior school of whom 45 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The senior school caters for 333 girls aged eleven to sixteen and a further 85 girls are in the sixth form. The school community is culturally diverse and girls travel to the school from a wide geographical area to the south of London. The majority of junior pupils progress on to the senior school and most of those who leave enter the local maintained grammar schools. Over 50% of pupils continue on to the sixth form each year.
- 1.4 The average ability of pupils on entry to the junior school is slightly above the national average with pupils demonstrating a fairly wide range of ability. Over half of the girls have ability that is at least above average. The ability profile of the senior school to GCSE is above the national average. The majority of pupils are above average ability, with a fifth of girls demonstrating far above average ability and very few having ability that is below average. Although the overall ability of sixth form pupils on entry to the sixth form is above the national average. The spread of abilities is wider than in the rest of the school.
- 1.5 The school has identified 21 pupils in the junior school and 30 pupils in the senior school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and one senior girl has a statement of special educational needs. The junior school offers learning support to 12 pupils and in the senior school 18 pupils receive specialist help. There are 65 pupils throughout the school for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and 32 of these pupils receive specialist help.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills is good. The school is successful in meeting its aim to achieve high academic standards in a caring and supportive community. An excellent and rich curriculum supported by a strong extra-curricular provision enables pupils to develop their interests and talents both inside and outside the classroom and contributes considerably to the high levels of achievement. Creativity and the range of subject provision have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Good and sometimes excellent teaching and the pupils' positive and co-operative attitudes to learning result in progress that is good and sometimes exceptional for their age. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop independent learning skills. Marking is good overall although in the senior school pupils do not always understand the criteria used to mark their work. In a few lessons, levels of challenge and expectation are not always high enough. Strong provision for pupils with SEND and EAL enables their needs to be fully met. Support for the most able is good.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent and is supported by robust welfare and health and safety arrangements. Pastoral care is a strength of the school and is provided by a dedicated network of teachers and support staff. Pupils feel safe and cared for in a warm and secure environment and this gives them the opportunity to develop a strong sense of who they are and their place in the community. They have a keen sense of justice and fair play and have respect for themselves and others. Girls are articulate, enthusiastic and confident participants in the community. The cultural diversity within the school and the emphasis on community service and responsibility across all ages develops strong social and cultural awareness.
- 2.3 The combined governance of the Trust and the School Governing Body (SGP) provides good oversight of the education in the school and ensures full compliance with the regulatory requirements. The SGP is effective in its role as an active friend of the school, taking an active interest in its daily life. The Trust discharges its responsibilities well for strategic development and financial planning and is diligent in matters relating to welfare, health and safety to secure a safe environment for pupils. The quality of leadership and management throughout the whole school is good and although there have been a number of recent changes the roles and responsibilities are clear and planning for the future is thorough. The vision for the future development of the school has yet to be fully shared and discussed with the staff. The management have been successful in fulfilling the recommendations of the previous inspection report. Links with parents are good and although some parents on the pre-inspection questionnaire reported they are not encouraged to share in the life of the school, the inspection team noted a number of opportunities for them to be involved. A number of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire were also dissatisfied with the information given about their children's progress. The inspection team found some evidence to support their views regarding the clarity of assessment criteria and the level of detail in comments provided.

## **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.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- provide a written summary reporting the child's progress against the early learning goals and the assessment scales
- 2.6 In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- provide parents with the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent failing to collect a child at the appointed time
  - provide parents with the procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Monitor the quality of teaching more closely and share outstanding teaching practice to raise attainment further.
  2. Clarify the grading system on senior reports and improve the quality of comments provided.
  3. Continue to develop the outdoor play area, enabling the children in the EYFS to access the outdoor environment in all weathers.
  4. Provide more opportunities for children in the EYFS to experience and understand the wider world in real-life situations.

### **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, including the EYFS, the quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is good. Pupils are well educated and the school meets its aim to encourage the achievement of the highest academic standards and individual potential. For some pupils, who make considerable progress in school, their academic achievement is excellent. Pupils with far above average ability also demonstrate excellent achievement. Pupils with SEND and EAL have good and sometimes excellent levels of attainment and make good progress and achieve to the best of their ability.
- 3.2 At all ages pupils display good levels of knowledge and understanding across all subjects with well-developed skills in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Standards of literacy are high and written tasks are diligently completed to a good standard showing well-developed skills of presentation. Pupils listen attentively, can reason, and are articulate when expressing their views, as was evident in a 'brain storming' session in a sixth-form English literature lesson. In literacy work in the junior school, Year 4 pupils were skilled in the discussion and analysis of each other's work. Levels of numeracy and scientific knowledge are high. There are notable successes in national competitions in chemistry, biology and mathematics, including six gold awards in the Primary Mathematics Challenge. There is evidence in observed work of competent ICT skills and the ability to work independently or in groups on research projects. Creativity is evident from a young age as seen in the imaginative displays around the school. The junior school dragon and princess project and the striking art and ceramic work are good examples of the creative curriculum. Pupils achieve high standards in the many extra-curricular activities. They do well in speech and drama examinations and also in music through vocal and instrument tuition and in the many musical undertakings. Good standards of fitness and physical skill were demonstrated from a young age, and for some their achievement in sport is excellent, achieving regional and national successes. Several pupils have successfully worked as Wimbledon ball girls. Older pupils demonstrate good business skills in Young Enterprise schemes and some work towards silver level in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses national and international data for the years 2008 to 2010, the most recent years for which comparative data is available. The school enters pupils for GCSE, International GCSE (IGCSE) and A-level examinations. Results at GCSE have been far above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Performance in IGCSE Mathematics has been above international averages, and similar to UK averages where the benchmark is higher. Results in A level have been above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results at GCSE and A level have been good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress in the senior school and sixth form is above the average for pupils of similar abilities. The majority of girls on leaving the sixth form attain places in their first choice of university. In the junior school pupils are entered for national tests at age seven and eleven and results have been far above the national average for maintained primary schools, indicating that their progress in the junior school is exceptional when compared with the norm for pupils of similar ability.



3.4 Pupils learn with a positive attitude and are highly motivated. They come to their lessons ready to co-operate and to engage fully in the tasks set. They concentrate on the work and apply themselves well. They are eager to achieve and take great pride in their work. Their positive, confident and co-operative attitude combined with good behaviour in class contributes significantly to their high levels of achievement.

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

3.5 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision to the quality of pupils' learning and achievement is excellent and supports the aim of the school in providing a rich and diverse education. Since the previous inspection a curriculum review has been undertaken and this has resulted in significant improvements including increasing creativity in the junior school and widening the subject provision in the senior school. The curriculum effectively covers all the requisite areas of learning and is well planned to ensure continuity of education throughout the school. It is suited to all abilities and needs including the most able and those with SEND and EAL.

3.6 The curriculum consists of a broad core of subjects throughout the junior and senior school. Linguistic skills are enhanced by an extensive range of modern foreign languages on offer from a young age with pupils beginning the study of French from EYFS. The opportunity is also available to study Greek and Latin. The junior school curriculum is enhanced by themed weeks and activity days and the excellent team challenge programme which provides an opportunity for independent learning. At GCSE a wide range of optional subjects are timetabled to meet the pupils' personal aptitudes and interests. These are enhanced by additional subjects offered as twilight sessions including psychology, statistics, performing arts and business studies. IGCSE maths and science have been introduced to provide further options and challenge. The wide choice continues at A level with the school trying to meet the personal interests of each pupil. The extended project has been introduced for all sixth form pupils. Good support is provided for pupils who need extra help, including specialist support for SEND and EAL. In the senior school weekly learning clinics offer exceptional help to all pupils who require reinforcement of subject material.

3.7 There is an excellent programme of personal, social, health and community education (PSHCE) in the junior school and a comprehensive life skills course throughout the senior school. Due attention is given to the issues of bullying, cyber bullying, health education and personal safety. Citizenship is taught throughout the school, and covers concepts of right and wrong, fair trade, democracy, and global concerns. Careers education is thorough in the senior school and offers excellent advice at key transitional stages.

3.8 The curriculum is enriched throughout the school from Year 1 by a good range of extra-curricular activities which fulfil the school aim of enabling pupils to enjoy and develop their interests and talents. The programme includes a wide range of sport, creative, leisure and charitable activities and participation rates are high. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work in teams and as individuals. Strong links with the community and trips and visits further afield further enhance their education outside the classroom. Pupils are involved in music and drama with another local maintained school; take part in community events and local competitions; and have the opportunity in Year 12 to do voluntary service locally. Charity fundraising supports many worthy causes and World Challenge enables

pupils to offer practical assistance abroad. An excellent programme of visits overseas and exchanges enhance the pupils' learning and cultural awareness.

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

- 3.9 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall and sometimes it is excellent. Across all ages and subject areas teaching enables pupils to achieve high academic standards and to acquire the skills to think and learn independently as set out in the school aims. Pupils with SEND and EAL are supported effectively which enables them to achieve as well as their peers.
- 3.10 Teaching is effective in securing good progress and in most lessons it is well planned with good teacher knowledge, clear objectives, appropriate pace and careful time management. The best lessons provide work which is suitably varied to match the range of ability in the class. Significant improvements in the diagnosis, management and tracking of pupils with SEND or EAL have resulted in some excellent teaching strategies being employed throughout the school. In the best lessons there is challenge for pupils of all abilities. There is good provision for the most able with appropriate extension work cascading naturally into lessons. Less successful lessons are characterised by a pace of delivery that is too slow to retain interest and by low expectations of pupils' abilities. A lack of challenge or excitement in some lessons fails to lead to any dynamic discussion of the topic or a desire to investigate further.
- 3.11 Teachers have effective classroom management skills which promote excellent behaviour and aids understanding. They know their pupils well, understand their needs and work to nurture their confidence. The rapport between teachers and pupils establishes a relaxed and productive working relationship and staff give freely of their time to provide individual support within lessons or at lunchtime and after school. Opportunities to promote independent learning were observed for all ages and are especially well developed at the upper end of the senior school. Individual research tasks are a feature of the work in a range of subjects and in the high quality work produced in the Extended Project Qualification observed in the sixth form. There are some good examples of collaborative work in pairs, teams and groups exemplified by a senior school religious studies lesson in which pupils made group presentations on the theme of equality. In a junior school mathematics lesson on telling the time, groups achieved a variety of challenging objectives.
- 3.12 A range of good resources are used well in lessons and a number of teachers use ICT competently to aid their planning and presentation. Interactive whiteboards are used creatively throughout the junior school. In some senior school lessons the technology available is not always used imaginatively or interactively to stimulate interest. The creative use of resources in the junior school livened up many lessons and aided enjoyment of the topic, such as the mini-whiteboards and clock faces used in numeracy and literacy lessons. The well-managed and well-stocked library and good access to computer suites assist teaching by increasing the range of resources available.
- 3.13 Pupils' work and progress are assessed regularly. The quality of marking is generally good throughout the school. In the junior school it is accompanied by positive comments and suggestions for improvement and good examples of peer and self-evaluation were observed in some subjects. In the senior school the departments apply their own marking policies effectively and constructive comments aid progress. The use of national curriculum levels, however, is not uniformly

understood by all pupils especially when the grade criteria are not included with their work. The use of academic data to track pupil progress is thorough at all levels with good records maintained.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent, and in accordance with the aims of the school allows each pupil to develop a set of personal values in a caring and supportive community.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is good. An ethos exists within the school community which allows pupils to grow and flourish into self-assured young people who have a strong sense of who they are and what they believe in. The school fosters a sense of respect for all faiths, and pupils develop an understanding of their own personal identity and their position in a diverse school and multi-faith community. This is achieved through curriculum work, the newly re-invigorated PSHCE and life skills programme, school assemblies, ethics and beliefs days and visits to local places of worship.
- 4.3 Respect for others, good behaviour and a sense of fair play are evident throughout the school and pupils develop excellent moral awareness. They show an ability to distinguish clearly between right and wrong and a keen sense of justice is evident at all ages. Senior pupils are passionate about such enterprises as the Amnesty International group and fair trade. The younger pupils are keen to speak out against any injustice in school. In the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire some pupils considered that teachers do not always treat children equally and that the school's reward system is not always consistently applied. The inspection team found some evidence to support their view, finding a lack of consistency across some teachers in how they reward pupils.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Relationships between pupils and adults within the school and amongst pupils of different ages and cultural backgrounds are strikingly positive. They work well together in pairs and small groups, and enjoy a sense of teamwork and cohesion. Confidence is developed in the varied opportunities for community service, for example, in the Year 12 community work programme. Pupils of all ages develop social skills in school and in the community through their charity work. Girls take initiative and show responsibility in both junior and senior schools through their work in the house system and in the running of various extra-curricular clubs. The pre-inspection pupil questionnaire indicated a feeling from some pupils that the school did not listen sufficiently to pupils' opinions but the evidence found by the inspection team did not support this view. School councils provide an effective voice for pupils, revealed recently in improvements of the catering provision and of junior school playground equipment.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. The pupils appreciate the school's racial and cultural diversity and acquire a respect for their own and other cultures in a manner which promotes tolerance and harmony. Pupils develop a healthy understanding of British culture and institutions through the curriculum, especially the citizenship education in the life skills and PSHCE programme which includes visiting speakers. The process whereby pupils become confident contributors to their community is aided by participation in local events, such as the recent remembrance day parade in Sutton at which the Year 6 pupils provided the choir. Visits and trips to many cultural centres at home and abroad further develop their understanding of the wider world.

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

- 4.6 The quality of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good throughout the school. The pastoral care provided for the pupils is excellent. Together these provide a strong and caring support structure which focuses on enabling the pupils to flourish in all areas of school life.
- 4.7 Throughout the school the form tutors are central to the pastoral care and they know their pupils well. In the senior school an effective network including the heads of year and the senior leadership pastoral care team is in place to support the pupils further. They meet frequently and communicate concerns to staff on a daily basis or through a weekly staff meeting. Detailed records are kept and made available. In the junior school the welfare of pupils is always first on the agenda of weekly staff meetings and daily notices are issued and play a key part in the start of each day to highlight any concerns. Good extra support is provided throughout the school by the special educational needs and EAL teachers, a registered school nurse and a school counsellor. The pupils feel there is always someone they can talk to and in the pupil interviews they reported that they feel safe and secure and well looked after as individuals. Opportunities to discuss issues are provided by a good programme of PSHCE in the junior school and life skills in the senior school. The school has a good relationship with the local authority PSHCE team who deliver some life skills on sensitive topics.
- 4.8 There are good policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the pupils. There is a clear and effective child protection policy and all procedures are in place to protect against all forms of bullying. Any incidents of bullying are taken seriously. Staff and governors have participated in recent child protection training. Safe recruitment procedures ensure that all the required checks on prospective employees are made, and they are correctly entered on the central register. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are highly effective. Detailed risk assessments are adhered to and these are regularly reviewed. A medical centre run by a health care professional provides good daily care and health records are well maintained and medicines are stored and distributed safely. The school has a suitable three-year disability plan in operation. Access to buildings and to toilets for those with disabilities is good. Facilities for serving food are satisfactory. There is an effective healthy living programme promoted through the curriculum and pupils have good access to grounds and facilities for exercise and sporting activities. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The GDST provides the overall governance, as it does for all 26 of its schools. In addition, the school is supported by a board of local school governors (the SGP). Together, these two bodies provide good governance and support for the school and achieve the stated aims of both the Trust and those that are specific to the school.
- 5.2 The Trust provides effective oversight of the medium and long term strategic planning and financial management and ensures continued investment in accommodation, resources and suitably qualified staff. Like all Trust schools, Sutton High School benefits from expert guidance on key issues such as finance, safeguarding and health and safety, with regular visits by members of the Trust to ensure compliance on these matters. Systems are in place to ensure the proper monitoring of both policies and practices in the school. Key policies and procedures are provided and ratified by the Trust although adapted by management to the needs of the school. The Trust also provides training of key members of staff and regular support for both the headmistress and the chair of the SGP. Trust members undergo frequent training in their responsibilities. A link Trustee regularly attends meetings of the local governing body. The Trust is kept well informed about the school through frequent informal communication and detailed reports from the headmistress. Although some parents felt that the Trust did not communicate recent leadership changes to their satisfaction, the CEO and Directors of the GDST respond to concerns when they arise and make frequent and regular visits to the school, including, for example, to a meeting of parents to discuss their concerns when the school leadership changed.
- 5.3 The SGP, which has no legal responsibility or executive power, has good local knowledge of the school, and its members are active in supporting events and being fully involved in the everyday life of the school. Its members are willing and ready to be supportive to the headmistress and see themselves as critical friends to the school. They are well known to staff and pupils. A 'governor of the month' initiative has been introduced into the school and a dedicated governor has been appointed to the EYFS department. The local governors are fully trained in child protection and safeguarding matters. They know the school well and make valuable suggestions for development planning. The governors have ensured that the recommendations of the previous inspection have been complete. The Trust is kept well informed about the school through frequent informal communication and detailed headmistress' reports.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good. The school is well led by strong leadership and a recently restructured senior leadership team. Together they are developing a clear vision for the future and have the energy and enthusiasm to make the changes they feel will further improve the quality of pupils' education and personal development. The aims of the school to provide high academic standards in a warm and caring community continue to be met.
- 5.5 New management roles and responsibilities have been created and clarified. The changes have resulted in a period where some members of the school community, including some pupils, have felt unsettled, but it has also led to thorough self-evaluation and a sharper focus on planning for both the medium and the long term. The senior leadership team have successfully fulfilled the recommendation of the previous report to develop the medium term strategic planning that is founded on clear long term aims for the school. The strategic development plan has clear aims with time frames to take the school forward. Strong and creative leadership in the junior school is developing a collaborative team who are motivated to work closely together to deliver excellent personal development alongside high academic standards.
- 5.6 The roles of middle managers are clear. In the senior school strong departmental team work combined with dedicated heads of year has maintained careful oversight of pupils' work and personal development. Key stage leaders in the junior school successfully monitor both academic and pastoral standards thoroughly. There is evidence of good planning and target setting in all departments. Appraisal is conducted effectively and is beginning to be linked to whole school development planning. The senior leadership team have successfully implemented the recommendation of the previous report for a more extensive use of national benchmarking assessment data in order that the progress of pupils can be monitored more closely.
- 5.7 The school has recruited and retained well-qualified staff and carries out the correct arrangements for checking their suitability for working with children. Staff are fully up-to-date with their training in the areas of safeguarding and health and safety legislation, and implement all policies successfully. Communication on a daily basis throughout the school has recently improved through the use of email and the development of a shared area on the school computer network. Meetings of all levels of management and staff are frequent and good minutes are kept. An induction programme for new staff is thorough.

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

- 5.8 The school has good links with parents, guardians and carers in line with its aim to seek a strong partnership with parents and the community. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of parents were very pleased with the quality of education, support and pastoral care provided for their children. Since the previous inspection the school has improved its communication with parents. The school website is satisfactory and gives all the required information and details of policies and procedures for current and prospective parents. The parental portal on the website is in the initial stages of development and has the potential to become another valuable resource for communication. The school uses email and text messages to ensure the effective and efficient transmission of information to parents and there are informative weekly newsletters in both the senior and junior schools.
- 5.9 In the parent pre-inspection questionnaire a small number of parents did not believe they were encouraged to be involved in the life and work of the school but the inspection team found a number of opportunities for parents to take advantage of. There is an active parents' association which holds social events for the girls and parents and raises funds for the benefit of the pupils, for example, the junior school discovery zone and the sound system in Hayes Hall. In the junior school, parents also help on trips and visits. An effective class representative system, to empower parents to raise issues about school life, has also been established. In the senior school many parents participate in the careers fair to broaden the experiences for the older pupils. Throughout the school, parents are encouraged to attend school matches, concerts and productions.
- 5.10 The school has a suitable complaints policy. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a number of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school's handling of concerns. Inspectors found evidence that concerns of parents, in most cases, are being dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school. A number of parents were also dissatisfied with the information given about their children's progress. Inspectors found that in the junior school the content of the pupils' reports is satisfactory but in the senior school the reporting system lacks clarity and detail. The use of National Curriculum grade levels without accompanying criteria of grade descriptions could be confusing for some parents. Comments by teachers on pupils' level of achievement and progress are not always sufficiently detailed. Throughout the school there is good opportunity to discuss pupil progress with staff through parent evenings. Additional information meetings are provided when required.

**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 setting is outstanding. Staff recognise the children's unique qualities and meet their needs within a safe environment. Through careful observations they identify the next steps needed to further their learning, enabling each child to make excellent progress. Parents are very supportive of the setting and appreciate the care provided by the staff. Development plans drawn up with support from external assessments, and from discussions between staff, ensure that plans for continuous improvement are effective. Since the previous inspection improvements have been made, such as providing an appropriate family-style experience at lunch times.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. A particularly strong feature is the organisation between classes. Adults are well qualified, well deployed and suitable to work with children. They have an excellent understanding of a child's learning needs. The safeguarding of the children is of the utmost importance and is enhanced by appropriate risk assessments. Links with outside agencies support the school's professional development and staff meetings provide valuable opportunities for targets for improvement to be identified. This enables the vision for improvement to be shared. Resources are stored appropriately and used effectively. Appropriate training is undertaken by the staff and this enables them to meet the needs of the children, providing high-quality care and education. Policies and procedures are in place and mostly implemented. However, at the time of the initial visit the school did not fully meet all the requirements because it did not provide parents with the procedures to be followed if a child was not collected at the appointed time or went missing. Parents were also not provided with a written summary for parents against the EYFS assessment scales. By the time of the team visit, the setting had gone a significant way towards rectifying these shortcomings.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. Adults support the children's learning and welfare very well and make excellent use of the indoor and outdoor environment. However, access to the outdoors is not accessible in all weathers. Planning to support children's needs and to provide an enjoyable and challenging experience, is excellent. Children's individual needs are noted through comprehensive observations and careful details of progress are recorded. An excellent balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, provides the children with opportunities to become confident, active learners. Staff skilfully match activities to individual children's needs and children are responsive learners. Children are supported extremely well by their key person who provides safe and clear routines for them. Children enjoy healthy meals and understand the benefits of exercise. Daily risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment ensure suitability and safety of the resources.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children are outstanding. In relation to their starting points and capabilities children make excellent progress. By the end of the Reception class children are articulate in their communication, enjoy their learning and show very positive attitudes. They can understand simple addition and subtraction and apply their growing mathematical knowledge to their chosen pursuit. Children explore and investigate with enthusiasm when studying spiders under a magnifying glass and they use their initiative and show excellent levels of independence and creative thinking. Skills for the future are well developed as in the use of simple computer programmes. They develop a very good awareness of personal safety and hygiene, are taught about keeping safe and clearly understand the need for routines such as hand washing. Children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world is developed through their play. Opportunities in class to listen to visiting adults talking about their work provide important experiences. However, opportunities to experience the wider world are less strong. Behaviour is managed positively and the children behave considerately, making friends and accepting each other's differences.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Carole Long	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Miss Karen Tuckwell	Head, GSA/IAPS school
Mr Philip Lough	Headmaster, IAPS school
Mrs Pamela Hutley	Headmistress, GSA school
Mr James Sheridan	Headmaster, GSA school
Mr Roger Tapping	Senior teacher, GSA school
Mrs Angela Russell	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector