



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CARRDUS SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Carrdus School

Full Name of School	Carrdus School
DfE Number	928/6046
Address	Carrdus School Overthorpe Hall Banbury Oxfordshire OX17 2BS
Telephone Number	01295 263 733
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Email Address	office@carrdusschool.co.uk
Headmistress	Miss Susan Carrdus
Proprietor	Carrdus School Trust
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	152
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (30 boys; 122 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 32 5-11: 120
Number of Day Pupils	152
Number of Boarders	0
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection date/EYFS	11 May 2010 to 12 May 2010
Final (team) visit	14 Jun 2010 to 16 Jun 2010

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 June 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

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

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

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

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 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 does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Carrdus School is a non-selective preparatory day school for boys from the age of three to eight and girls from the age of three to eleven. The school was founded in 1952 in Banbury, moving to Overthorpe Hall, a Victorian house in the countryside above the town, in 1970. In 1985, the founder retired as headmistress and appointed her daughter to that position. The school became an educational trust in 1991, and is administered by two trustees, one of whom is the headmistress, supported by two advisers. Since the last inspection, attendance at the Nursery can now be full time, the school day has been extended and an information and communication technology (ICT) suite has been added.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, 152 pupils were on roll, with 32 of these in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom twenty attended part time. Thirty pupils were boys. None of the pupils are learning English as an additional language, and virtually all pupils are of white British origin. Twenty-four pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). Most pupils come from Banbury and the surrounding villages, although a number travel a considerable distance to attend the school. The overall ability profile of the pupils is above the national average. Boys leave the school at the age of seven or eight and continue their primary education in other local preparatory or maintained schools. When the girls leave at the age of eleven, the majority transfer to local independent day or boarding schools, with a few going further afield, and some move on to maintained schools for their senior education.
- 1.3 The school aims to encourage each pupil to achieve the highest possible standards by working closely with parents and providing a supportive and challenging learning environment where pupils feel known, safe and valued and where they receive excellent teaching. It strives to offer a broad, balanced curriculum which develops pupils' particular strengths, supports their needs and encourages them to think for themselves, act and work independently and show tolerance and respect for others. It seeks to develop a climate of success, good behaviour and hard work where achievement is recognised and rewarded.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Carrdus School fulfils its aims of encouraging pupils to achieve high standards and providing a supportive environment in which pupils are valued and where their particular strengths are developed. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years provision is good with some outstanding features. Throughout the school, the quality of pupils' learning, achievement and progress over time is good. Pupils develop knowledge, understanding and a range of skills effectively across many subjects, complemented by exemplary behaviour and excellent attitudes to learning. Their academic success is supported by a broad curriculum, including a comprehensive list of trips and visits, and particular strengths in art, music, drama and sports. Since the last inspection, the use of ICT in teaching, learning and the curriculum has improved, with the appointment of a specialist in this area and the provision of a computer room. Another factor in pupils' academic success is the strong quality of teaching, which enables pupils to achieve well in relation to their ability. Whilst teachers' subject knowledge is particularly effective in motivating and enthusing pupils, on occasion the over-directed method employed in some teaching restricts the opportunity for pupils to think for themselves.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent, but cultural awareness is less strong than spiritual, moral and social awareness, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils respect each other and collaborate very well, and, although in their pre-inspection questionnaires pupils raised the issue of having little opportunity to take responsibility, senior pupils are involved in fund-raising for local and national charities and they support younger pupils at various times during the school day. Their excellent relationships with each other and with staff are supported by the outstanding pastoral care shown by all in the school community, both teaching and ancillary staff. Day-to-day practice in the safeguarding of pupils is good, and a weakness in fire safety at the time of the initial visit had been rectified by the end of the inspection.
- 2.3 Governance is sound with some strong features, including financial provision for human and material resources. Although systems for monitoring areas of regulation are under-developed, the two advisers support the headmistress/trustee well with their expertise. Whilst all recruitment checks on staff had been appropriately undertaken by the end of the inspection, at the time of the initial visit difficulties associated with such checks meant that management had not always been robust in this area. The strong leadership of the headmistress and her dedicated staff team provides a clear vision for the future as seen in the recent school development plan, but this is not closely linked to the appraisal process and the monitoring of teaching and learning. Links with parents and carers are outstanding and a strength of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive in all areas of school life, and no significant concerns were raised in the pre-inspection questionnaires.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended, and therefore it was required to:
- implement all parts of the fire safety policy [Regulation 3.(5), under Welfare, health and safety];
 - ensure that all recruitment checks are carried out on staff and volunteers before their appointment [Regulation 4.(2)(a) and (d); 4C.(2)(b); 4C.(3); under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason 3.(2)(b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified both of the above shortcomings, as far as it was possible to do so, as noted in the text of the report.
- 2.6 The school's provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and no action was required.

(ii) Recommended action

- 2.7 In addition to rectifying the weaknesses in meeting regulatory requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Share best practice in teaching and actively promote opportunities for pupils to think for themselves.
 2. Formalise management processes so that appraisal and the monitoring of teaching and learning are more closely linked to the school development plan.
 3. Continue to improve a well-structured and equipped outdoor area to further enhance the free flow between indoor and outdoor activities in the EYFS.
 4. Increase further the EYFS children's awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The standards of learning and achievement are good and broadly in line with the school's aims. Results in national tests at the ages of seven and eleven, over the last three years for which comparative data are available, have been excellent when compared with the national average for maintained primary schools. Pupils' achievement and progress over time are good in relation to their ability profile, which is above the national average. Pupils' literacy skills, especially speaking and listening, are well developed; they are articulate and listen to their teachers carefully. The library is currently being re-housed and so it was not possible to see it in use during the inspection, but reading is given a high priority. Standards of reading are notable and pupils read fluently and with expression. Their writing skills are effectively used across a range of genres, as seen in creative stories, poetry, letter writing and the giving of instructions.
- 3.2 Pupils' numeracy skills are good and are applied well in a range of subjects, including science and geography. ICT skills are also strong and evidence was seen of the use of ICT in several subjects, including mathematics and English. Pupils' reasoning skills are well developed, although on occasion the style of teaching limits the opportunity that pupils have to think for themselves and share their ideas with their peers. Design and technology (DT) and art work around the school shows a high level of creativity. Drama and music are strong subjects and productions which involve everyone in the school are of high quality. Pupils work well individually and co-operatively.
- 3.3 Pupils are successful in a wide range of activities, and these achievements make an effective contribution to their personal development, enabling them to demonstrate their individual confidence, their team skills, and their respect for each other. Almost all pupils have been successful in gaining entry to their first choice senior schools, some of which have strong academic entry requirements, and on average four scholarships are gained each year. Some pupils have achieved well in the primary mathematics challenge at gold level and others participate strongly in gymnastics at national level and swimming at county level. The school teams are regularly successful in cross-country, hockey, netball and equestrian events, and in particular in swimming. In addition, choirs and individual vocalists enjoy much success in local music festivals and instrumentalists do well in music examinations.
- 3.4 The application of pupils to their work is exceptionally good in nearly all lessons, effectively supporting their achievements, and concentration only flags on the few occasions when the pace of the lesson slows. Pupils generally pay attention and work hard with enjoyment. Their behaviour is exemplary, making a strong contribution to the quality of their learning.

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

- 3.5 The quality of the curriculum is good and makes an effective contribution to pupils' achievements and personal development. It is commensurate with the school's aim to strive to offer a broad curriculum, which develops pupils' particular strengths and supports their needs. Very good progress has been made in the provision of ICT since the last inspection. A new computer room, favourable time allocation and a dedicated ICT teacher have been provided, and a scheme of work has been written. Good use is made of ICT across the different curriculum areas.
- 3.6 The curriculum is well suited to the needs of pupils. It covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum as well as French, drama, religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE), the latter two being taught together. Subjects are given an appropriate time allocation within the timetable, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening skills, all of which are developed well. Specialists teach some subjects and, within all, pupils benefit from the enthusiasm and expertise of their teachers. Extra support or challenge is given within some lessons where pupils are split into smaller ability groups. The programme for PSHE is detailed and comprehensive and reflects well the aims and ethos of the school, including sex and relationships education, awareness of drug and substance abuse, and citizenship.
- 3.7 The provision for those pupils with LDD and SEN is good. Individual education plans are provided for those with SEN. These are reviewed regularly; targets are set in agreement with parents and appropriate support is provided. The wide range of individual needs is recognised and assistance is given by specialist staff to both support and extend numeracy and literacy skills. Teaching assistants are deployed well to enhance the provision. Gifted and talented pupils profit from a range of puzzles, challenges and investigations to promote higher-level thinking skills, particularly in mathematics. Curriculum planning is thorough in some subjects with appropriate emphasis given to cross-curricular links. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.8 Extra-curricular provision is sound, with a range of musical and sporting activities, but fewer opportunities exist for pupils to follow other hobbies and interests. Not all teachers contribute to the activity programme. The 'Teatimers' club, which caters for those waiting for their parents to collect them, is highly popular with pupils, providing them with further opportunities for social integration. A comprehensive programme of trips and outings provides effective enrichment. There are strong sports and music links with independent and maintained schools locally. The residential trip to France is a highly beneficial academic and social experience. Links with the community include an annual visit to a nearby hospice and carol singing in the local shopping centre. The Christmas and Spring Fairs involve the whole community. Visiting local speakers further enhance the curriculum, such as a talk about Kenya that provided valuable information for work in geography. The Year 6 annual charity sale supports local and national charities selected by pupils.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 The quality of teaching is good and makes a significant contribution to the achievements of pupils. It is in line with the aim of the school to encourage each pupil to achieve the highest possible standards by providing a supportive and challenging learning environment.
- 3.10 Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subjects and by their enthusiasm foster the interest of the pupils. In the best lessons, this encourages pupils to ask pertinent questions, which they do, comfortable in the knowledge that teachers will listen to them. Teachers know their pupils very well, are sensitive to their needs and plan carefully according to individual requirements so that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Extra support is given by specialist literacy and numeracy teachers and by teaching assistants who effectively help those children with LDD or SEN within the classroom or on a small group basis. Resources of good quality and quantity are well used, including those for ICT.
- 3.11 A variety of teaching methods are employed in many lessons to help maintain pupils' interest as well as to aid their progress. The pace of lessons is generally good and excellent behaviour is encouraged. In a few lessons, over-directed teaching or a loss of pace led to fewer opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or engage with each other's ideas.
- 3.12 Assessment is good. In some classes, informal teacher assessment leads to target setting in English, mathematics and science, as well as in personal development. Most pupils understand these targets well and find them useful guides to aid improvement. Standardised tests in English, mathematics, verbal and non-verbal reasoning and annual spelling and reading tests are carried out and analysed to identify those pupils who may need extra help or more challenge. Whilst monitoring is done using National Curriculum levels of attainment, best use is not yet made of all the data collected in order to ensure that pupils are achieving as well as they can. All work is marked regularly and encouraging comments abound. The best marking informs pupils of what is good in their work and what they need to do to improve. Pupils say they find this very helpful.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Their personal qualities are developed extremely well and in accordance with the school's aim for pupils to show tolerance and respect for others. Outstanding mutual respect exists between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is extremely good. They express themselves and their feelings clearly and have strong self-esteem, which is encouraged by the school's support and awareness of all their achievements. Pupils have an extremely strong sense of pride in their work, fostered by the highly coveted headmistress' award. Their sensitivity to the wonders of nature is enhanced by the full use of the tranquil environment in which the school is set. They respond reflectively to stories and have sympathy for those suffering hardship in various situations. Pupils develop an effective appreciation and understanding of the major religions. Younger pupils' sense of wonder was evident as they watched the sand of a timer match the minute hand of a clock.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is outstanding. They articulate their ideas clearly and with conviction. Their exemplary behaviour both inside and outside the classroom is a reflection of their capacity to distinguish right from wrong. In lessons, in activities and around the school, they listen, share and want to do what is right. Through their charity work and consideration for each other, they reflect upon the needs of others and are conscientious in their support and help. Pupils discuss moral issues very well; for example, they discussed the importance of relationships making them feel safe, and they reflect on the consequences of anti-social behaviour on individuals and communities, linking this with bullying and racism, in their PSHE lessons.
- 4.4 Pupils have an excellent social awareness and, whilst there are no formal positions of responsibility, a fact which a few pupils were concerned about in their pre-inspection questionnaires, all pupils in Year 6 assist younger pupils who may be in need of a comforting word at break time or help with playground games. They escort the youngest from assemblies and preside over the lunch tables with thoughtfulness. The privilege of making and running 'dens' is undertaken seriously by Year 6 pupils who have built their own meeting circle in the grounds to discuss matters of importance to them and to resolve any potential disputes. In other year groups, some responsibilities are given in the form of librarians or cloakroom monitors. Pupils collaborate extremely well in pair or group work in lessons. They have a simple understanding of the democratic process and know about local voluntary groups, which gives them a further interest in the local community.
- 4.5 Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture enhanced by visits to local museums and other places of interest. They also have an effective awareness of some celebrations such as Diwali or Holi, which are explored through assemblies and the curriculum. Whilst pupils' understanding of their own culture is strong, their knowledge of other backgrounds is more limited. However, pupils have gained valuable first-hand experience of other cultures through the annual French Day with its focus on music, drama, food and language, the making of African masks, an African Tribal assembly and information from various visitors to assemblies.

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

- 4.6 The overall quality of welfare, health and safety of pupils is good, fulfilling the aim of the school to provide a supportive environment where pupils feel valued. The pastoral care shown to pupils is excellent, and is given a high priority within the school's ethos and routines, supporting pupils' personal development exceptionally well. A strong feature of care is the system of 'purple books', in which staff record any important information about pupils, both pastoral and academic. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, which were overwhelmingly positive in nearly all respects, indicate that most pupils feel that staff are consistent in their dealings with them and they appreciate the help that they are given, both personally and within the classroom. Pupils say that they are very well cared for, and that they have an adult to turn to should they have a problem. They particularly like the fact that the headmistress knows them all very well. Relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves are outstanding. Staff have high expectations of standards of behaviour, being excellent role models in this regard, and pupils respond very well. They believe that bullying is very rare and are confident that staff deal with any behaviour difficulties quickly and constructively.
- 4.7 Whilst recruitment procedures in the past have revealed weaknesses, the safeguarding of pupils is effective in day-to-day practice; all staff are trained in safeguarding to appropriate levels depending on their responsibility and the policy is robust. Overall, health and safety procedures are good. Measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards although, at the initial visit, the headmistress had not been trained for her role as fire marshal. This training has now taken place. Effective risk assessments cover buildings and grounds, subject areas and lessons, and external visits. Arrangements for those pupils who may fall ill during the school day are suitable. An accessibility plan has been written which is designed to improve the educational provision for those with disabilities. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise, and fully appreciate the lunches which are nutritious with a choice of meals, including plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit. Throughout the year they participate with enthusiasm in several different individual and team sports. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained and correctly stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance of the school is sound overall, with some strong features. The school trust consists of two trustees, one of whom is the headmistress, and the other is not directly involved with the management or running of the school. The headmistress receives support in the governance of the school from an ex-employee and the accountant, who act as advisers and help to oversee educational and financial matters. Governance ensures the aims of the school are broadly met and supports their fulfilment well. Whilst much of the discussion at this level is not formally recorded, it is clear that the financial provision for material resources, accommodation and staffing is good and meets the needs of the pupils.
- 5.2 Strong educational support is given by the adviser with expertise in that field, who works within the school at times when the situation requires it, and, together with the headmistress, ensures that high educational standards are consistently maintained. A system for keeping effective oversight of some aspects of welfare, health and safety, for example the recruitment of staff, is under-developed, although the headmistress as trustee has reviewed the strong policy and procedures for safeguarding. By being within the school on a regular basis and through their discussions with the headmistress, the advisers are well informed about the strengths of, and challenges for, the school and support its improvement and growth. Opportunities exist for staff to know the advisers well and they are involved in discussions concerning the future developments of the school.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Strong leadership and sound management enable the aims of the school to be largely fulfilled, both contributing to, and reflecting, the good quality of the pupils' education and their excellent personal development. Whilst the headmistress does not have a senior management team, except for the strong support of the secretary, all staff, teaching, non-teaching and ancillary, are fully committed to their roles, know the pupils very well and work very effectively as a group. The headmistress has a good vision for the future of the school, and this has recently been committed to paper in a formal school development plan, which was a recommendation at the time of the last inspection. The generation of this has involved staff discussion, but it is not clearly focused on the priorities for raising standards and does not include any costings or success criteria. However, a great deal of information about pupils is shared in staff meetings and informally at other times, and clearly indicates the excellent care which is shown to pupils and which lies at the heart of the school's ethos. Staff share their concerns about pupils and about their own work with the headmistress weekly, through the system of 'purple books' which are used as reflective logs of any issues arising. The headmistress demonstrates a very effective approach to pastoral care for her staff through this method of sharing information of importance and gives continual support.
- 5.4 Subject co-ordinators have produced schemes of work which vary in quality but the best are excellent. All staff participate in a suitable appraisal system and a good range of in-service training sessions, which regularly take place internally after school as well as externally. Staff monitor the quality of teaching and learning through scrutinising pupils' work on a regular basis and informal lesson observation

is undertaken, but the latter is not linked closely enough to the school development plan and to the appraisal process, and so does not have a sufficient impact on raising the level of pupils' achievements still higher.

- 5.5 Staff are well qualified and deployed effectively to give the support required to meet the needs of pupils. They have been trained in the important areas of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and show high levels of care and concern for pupils. A centralised register records the recruitment checks carried out on staff when they were appointed. Whilst the recruitment of staff was not always undertaken sufficiently rigorously in the past, in that not all checks were carried out before appointment, all staff have now been appropriately checked. Since the initial visit, two members of staff for appointment in September have been correctly recruited and a third is in the process of being so. Accommodation is used to best advantage and the outstanding environment in which the school stands is well maintained. Pupils' strong physical development benefits from the sports hall and swimming pool. Displays around the school, particularly of colourful art, are of high quality and celebrate pupils' success.

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

- 5.6 Links with parents and carers are excellent, fulfilling the school's aim to work closely with parents so that their children are encouraged to achieve the highest possible standards. The responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and there was no aspect of school life which was a significant concern. All parents who responded were particularly appreciative of the quality of teaching which they feel helps their children to make progress and the curriculum which is provided. The vast majority believe that they can communicate with the school easily, and that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and promotes worthwhile attitudes and values. They are also satisfied with the school's governance and management. Inspection findings agree with these positive views.
- 5.7 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school. They attend assemblies, productions and matches, sports days and swimming galas, and many choose to join their children's classrooms for the open morning. All parents are part of the parent-teacher association. Each class has two parent form representatives who meet together a few times each term not only to discuss fund-raising events but also to raise issues concerning the education and welfare of their children. The headmistress uses their voice as that of a critical friend, and this enables her to keep in touch with the views of parents at regular intervals.
- 5.8 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils have access to all the required information about the school and receive newsletters from both the headmistress and the parent teachers' association. The prospectus is colourful and gives a range of helpful information, and the website is another avenue for finding out about the school. The parents' handbook introduces new parents to school routines in a detailed and comprehensive way. Parents' evenings are organised once every term and reports are sent home annually. These give detailed information about the progress pupils have made in all subjects and extra-curricular activities, and set targets for future learning in English, mathematics and science. All staff are available to meet with parents on a daily basis. Evidence shows that parental concerns are handled carefully. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and its 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 overall effectiveness of the setting is good with some outstanding features. There is a welcoming family atmosphere, where children make significant progress in their learning and development. Children's needs are very well met through a broad range of activities. The setting has a good capacity for improvement, as evidenced through the good progress made in the recommendations of the last report, in the areas of independent choice of activities, information on progress for parents, and children's general awareness of cultures.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good. Children are safeguarded effectively and cared for exceptionally well, due to the efficient implementation of comprehensive policies, in a nurturing environment where individuals are valued by suitable, well-qualified staff. Equality and diversity are promoted well. Excellent assessment ensures that no child or group is disadvantaged. Staff sustain existing high standards by identifying areas for development through thorough self-evaluation. They work as a happy, caring and effective team, productively reflecting upon their practice and planning for improvement. Learning is enhanced by the good management and use of a range of resources, which are easily accessible to the children. Relationships with parents are overwhelmingly positive, as is reflected in their supportive and appreciative comments in the pre-inspection questionnaire.

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

6.3 Provision for learning and development is good overall. Assessment through observation is rigorous, and information gained is used effectively to guide planning and target next steps in learning. Adults provide children with stimulating experiences in all developmental areas, which are balanced effectively between challenging, purposeful play that is teacher-directed and that which is child-initiated. Provision to allow the free flow of indoor and outdoor activities is good for Nursery; Reception does not at present have the same access. The children are beginning to develop an understanding of their own culture and that of others. They are observant and inquisitive, and staff ask challenging questions to develop children's thinking skills. They are quick to see where support is needed. Children's safety is accounted for well, and care is excellent. Parents are well informed of their children's learning and achievement through the provision of an excellent range of information. Children develop a strong understanding of safety and good attitudes to health and personal hygiene, because of the efficient, established systems followed by staff who know each child very well.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Children make good progress and achieve well by the end of the Reception year. They are extremely well motivated, confident, independent learners, who respond to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. They co-operate very well in their learning and begin to make choices and decisions. They are eager to contribute and listen to each other's views, and respond well to adults. The children enjoy using the computers, acquiring strong skills that are a valuable foundation for future learning. Relationships at all levels are excellent and children make friends easily. All children respect and trust their teachers. They feel safe and secure, enjoy choosing their lunch and snacks, and know about eating healthily and exercising. They are aware of the need for good hygiene and understand about being safe.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with one of the trustees and one adviser, 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 Elizabeth Coley	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Westcombe	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Ms Christine Lane	Team Inspector (Former Director of Studies, IAPS/HMC school)
Mrs Lynda Boden	Early Years Lead Inspector