



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**YORK HOUSE SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## York House School

Full Name of School	<b>York House School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>919/6128</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>311076</b>		
Address	<b>York House School Sarratt Road Redheath Croxley Green Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 4LW</b>		
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Head	<b>Mr Peter R MacDougall</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Gill Noach</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>229</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (216 boys; 13 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>37</b>	5-11: <b>119</b>
	11-13:	<b>73</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>229</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Zoe Sylvester</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>15 Feb 2011 to 16 Feb 2011</b>		
	<b>16 March 2011 to 18 March 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 March, 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 York House is a co-educational preparatory school for boys and girls aged from three to thirteen. The school was founded in 1910 in London and moved to its present location in 1966. It is based in a Georgian house set in 47 acres of its own grounds near Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire. Other buildings, play areas and sports pitches have been added. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is in the new pre-prep building and comprises a three-room kindergarten for three- to four-year-olds and other space for Reception age pupils. An educational trust consisting of a board of ten governors administers the school. The headmaster was appointed in 2005. Since the previous inspection the school has become co-educational with a phased intake from the youngest ages upwards. There has been extensive refurbishment and new teaching rooms, a science laboratory and design and technology (DT) and art rooms have been built.
- 1.2 Currently there are 229 pupils in the school, with 13 boys and 8 girls part-time in the Nursery and 27 boys in Reception. In the pre-prep, Years 1 and 2, there are 47 boys and 5 girls. Forty-one boys are in Years 3 and 4 in the junior school and 88 boys in Years 5 to 8 in the senior school. Pupils come from a radius of six to eight miles from the school. Entry is at any age, subject to satisfactory performance in a test suitable for that age. The majority of parents have a professional background.
- 1.3 The school does not enter pupils for national tests. The pupils' abilities are measured using verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a fairly wide range of abilities represented. The school has identified 50 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 27 pupils receive learning support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are 26 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). None needs extra support. Most pupils leaving York House gain places at their first choice senior school, some with scholarships to independent schools. A few enter maintained schools.
- 1.4 The school has a Christian ethos, but pupils of all faiths and no faith are welcome. It aims to provide a caring community in which pupils are encouraged to develop a self-reliant, self-disciplined and hard-working approach and build good social skills, self-awareness and team spirit. It aims to give pupils the best possible preparation for future studies and adult life, and to discover, nurture and develop each child's individual talents so that they reach their full potential.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school in the EYFS and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 York House provides a caring environment in which the pupils' individual talents are nurtured and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. A solid foundation for future learning is provided in the EYFS in which children make good progress in numeracy and literacy. At all ages, pupils of differing abilities reach good, sometimes excellent standards in relation to their ability and make good progress. Their achievements in a wide variety of sports and music are notable. Their attitudes to learning are excellent although their development of independent learning skills is variable when they are given limited encouragement to use these. A full range of extra-curricular activities, visits and speakers enhances the broad curriculum. Good teaching is characterised by thorough planning, excellent subject knowledge and use of a variety of resources and teaching methods. Some marking and assessment is excellent but overall it lacks consistency. Since the previous inspection, provision for pupils in the senior school needing learning support has been improved and these pupils are well supported throughout the school.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. This is evident in their self-assurance, concern for others, good behaviour and happiness. They show splendid spiritual and moral development, helped by the underlying Christian ethos of the school. Their social skills are well developed. They take their responsibilities seriously and together form part of a community in which they care for each other as well as for those in the local and wider community. High levels of cultural development are evident in their drama productions and work in class. Providing a caring and safe environment for its pupils is a high priority of the school. Staff and pupils have excellent relationships. All policies related to safeguarding, health and safety are comprehensive.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent, providing strong support for the school. Good leadership and management results in the pupils' excellent personal development and good learning. All recommendations from the last inspection report have been successfully met. This includes improved information and communications technology (ICT) provision, a developing appraisal system and better-focused staff training. Monitoring and development planning have also been improved but they remain inconsistent in practice. The school's excellent links with parents are reflected in the very positive response to questions in the pre-inspection questionnaires. Both pupils and parents are overwhelmingly happy with the school and only a small minority made negative comments, none of which was upheld by the inspection team.

## **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) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Strengthen opportunities for independent learning, particularly for older pupils.
2. Build on the best practice in the school to ensure greater consistency in monitoring, assessment and development planning by senior and middle managers.
3. Improve the arrangements for formal assessment in the EYFS.
4. Ensure that all staff in the EYFS are fully integrated within the school so that curriculum planning is improved for the benefit of the children.

### **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 pupils' overall achievement in academic and other activities is good, successfully fulfilling the school's aims of educating its pupils to a high standard. In some areas such as sport their achievement is excellent. They are well prepared for their next stage of education, in line with aims of the school, and most gain places at their first choice school.
- 3.2 In the pre-prep, pupils become competent readers, develop a good understanding of basic grammar and start to write well. As they move through the school pupils become increasingly articulate, show imagination and competent use of grammar in their writing, and read with good understanding. Mathematical skills, including problem solving, are good and sometimes well above expectations for their ability at all ages. Pupils say they enjoy their mathematics and the challenge it provides. Pupils have competent ICT skills but are rarely given opportunities to use these in other subjects, limiting their development of research, writing skills and graph presentation using ICT in different areas of the curriculum. Their scientific and technological knowledge is good and their practical skills are well developed.
- 3.3 Pupils develop good thinking skills through a number of subjects and extra-curricular activities. These are evident in their confident contributions to debating, and in their thoughtful written work in religious studies (RS). Good creative skills are seen in the pupils' writing and their acting. Many pupils are competent musicians. They pass public music examinations and some gain good marks at higher grades. Their skills and achievements in a wide variety of different sports are excellent. In the last year some reached finals of national swimming and badminton events and were successful regionally in athletics, cricket, rugby and football. A number of pupils win academic scholarships each year to senior schools, with others gaining sport or music awards.
- 3.4 Pupils' academic attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils follow the demanding syllabus for entry to senior independent schools and in the last few years many have achieved high marks in these examinations. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils, including those with LDD and the most able, reach good academic standards at all levels. This level of attainment as judged indicates that they make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. This is confirmed by evidence seen in lessons and in the pupils' written work during the inspection. Pupils receiving extra learning support also reach good standards and make good progress due to the effective support that they receive.
- 3.5 Attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils listen well, answer questions enthusiastically and work together co-operatively. They are well organized and generally take pride in the presentation of their work. The pupils' use of initiative and their independence in taking responsibility for their own learning are limited and vary across subjects and age groups. This is mainly due to a lack of consistency in the opportunities that they are given to do so. However, projects such as those on Asia in geography, which require older pupils to research for themselves, encourage independence. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and say that they love being at school.



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

- 3.6 The curriculum is good and is strongly enhanced by a wide range of opportunities in extra-curricular activities, and beneficial links with the community. It provides helpful support for the pupils' learning, preparing them well for future studies and adult life in line with the school's aims. In response to the previous inspection report the school has introduced more opportunities to use ICT into the curriculum. It has developed a detailed programme of personal, social, and health education (PSHE) and citizenship that further allows pupils to build good social skills, self-awareness and team spirit.
- 3.7 The curriculum successfully meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. In the pre-prep department pupils study PSHE, French and DT as well as other National Curriculum subjects, with a strong emphasis being given to mathematics and English. Specialist teaching in many subjects enhances the provision. From Year 5, the curriculum is dictated by the requirements of senior school entrance examinations. It is well supported by specialist teaching in all subjects. Latin is introduced and class teachers cover a small part of the comprehensive PSHE syllabus each day. All pupils have ICT lessons but its use is rarely required in other subjects. A strong emphasis on games means that pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in a wide variety of sports, supported by outstanding facilities. In some areas of the curriculum, such as art, opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity are limited. Drama is not a separate subject in the curriculum, although it is often used in teaching and all pupils have opportunities to be involved in productions.
- 3.8 Curriculum policies and schemes of work are detailed and helpful and ensure that pupils are well supported as they move from one year to another. They contain limited guidance to encourage independent learning. Occasionally subjects cover the same topics in different year groups thus reducing the breadth of the pupils' experience in that subject. A policy for the gifted and talented has recently been introduced. These pupils receive some extra enrichment, particularly in games and music and in some other subjects, including setting in mathematics, but this provision is not fully developed. The needs of pupils with LDD are fully covered through a detailed policy and excellent monitoring. Some receive individual tuition and others receive extra support in lessons. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons for younger pupils provide excellent support for pupils of all abilities through ability groups that work with an appropriate variety of stimulating resources and support.
- 3.9 A good range of extra-curricular activities is appreciated by all pupils. These include activities for pre-prep pupils. Activities such as archery, Taekwon-Do and canoeing are encompassed. One lesson each week is taken with activities thus ensuring that all pupils have good access to a range of activities, although many have to choose between these and games teams. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of residential trips, such as the Year 7 trip to France, and day trips to museums, the theatre and concerts, although visits to art galleries are few. Guest speakers, local links with senior citizens and the local church give further useful support to the curriculum. Year 8 pupils have an excellent range of activities arranged for their last term to prepare them for their next stage of education. These include talks on presentation skills and peer pressure.

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

- 3.10 The overall quality of teaching is good and successfully fulfils the school's aims of helping pupils reach high standards and preparing them for future studies. As a result of good teaching pupils make good progress, acquire knowledge and increase their skills. In the best lessons, pupils of differing abilities are catered for, supported where necessary and the most able challenged. In less successful teaching, over-direction, lack of variety in the tasks set for pupils, with limited regard for their individual potential, or lack of pace slow the pupils' progress. Some teaching is outstanding.
- 3.11 The pupils' learning is enhanced successfully by the excellent knowledge demonstrated in all teaching, whether by subject specialists or class teachers. Lessons are planned well, and generally incorporate a wide range of strategies. A music lesson for older pupils that incorporated singing, listening to some Wagner, written theory and performance on keyboards enabled them to learn about tonic chords rapidly. Questioning is used well to check the pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge, but use of open-ended questions to encourage pupils' independent learning is limited. In some subjects an excessive use of work sheets and lack of suitably challenging questioning limits the pupils' progress, particularly that of the more able. Interactive whiteboards are used to good effect. This use of ICT is a significant improvement from the previous inspection. Effective use is made of the good quality resources and accommodation for such subjects as DT and science, giving further support to teaching. Teachers know their pupils well and quiet but firm discipline is maintained in lessons.
- 3.12 Marking is regular and encouraging but is inconsistent across the school in giving detailed guidance for future progress. The best marking offers suggestions for future improvement alongside praise for what has been achieved. In some subjects, targets for development are written in the pupils' books, but formal target setting is not used regularly throughout the school. Some improvement in the use of assessment data to inform lesson planning has been made since the previous inspection. A good variety of standardised tests is used extremely well in the pre-prep and junior school to monitor progress of individual pupils, but their use is less effective in the senior school. In subjects such as maths, ICT and physical education (PE), individual pupil tracking is excellent.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' personal development is excellent and effectively fulfils the school's aims to enable pupils to develop good social skills, self-awareness and team spirit, and to encourage self-reliance and self-discipline within a caring community.
- 4.2 Pupils have a well-developed sense of the spiritual that is reinforced by the underlying Christian ethos of the school. They are confident and self-assured from an early age, and participation in assemblies and debating, for example, contributes effectively to raising self esteem. Pupils are caring and considerate and pleased to celebrate the achievements and contributions of others. They respond with sensitivity to such issues as war and conflict as prompted by the study of a World War 1 poet in Year 8, and show excitement and wonder when describing optical illusions seen in science lessons. Pupils gain insight into values and beliefs through the very effective PSHE curriculum and RS lessons and as a result they form a view of life that recognises and values differences. Pupils respect themselves and each other, and gain a strong sense of self-worth and self-confidence from the school community and from the support of their teachers.
- 4.3 Pupils show excellent moral development. They respect others and relate positively to staff and their peers. In discussion they demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong and understand the importance of behaving well. Behaviour both in class and around the school is usually excellent. The house system helps to reinforce this, encouraging the pupils to work together and to compete fairly. In interviews, they acknowledged how much they had gained from learning about and understanding the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. On a charity day they responded with empathy when they were told about the plight of children in Uganda
- 4.4 Pupils are very well developed socially. The older pupils willingly take on a range of responsibilities, from school librarians to prefects and house captains, while the younger pupils contribute by acting as class captains and monitors. There is a strong commitment to the school and a tremendous feeling of friendship throughout it, such as in the support given to new pupils and the care offered to younger pupils by older. Pupils are keen to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is strong. They understand other cultures, past and present, from their RS, PSHE and music lessons, as well as from history, geography and French. This knowledge is enhanced by outside visits for example to a Hindu centre in Year 2. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about participating in a visiting theatre group's Shakespearean production, and in a gamelan workshop at the Royal Festival Hall, as well as the benefits they gain from theatre and museum visits. Within the school pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds work and play harmoniously, thus increasing their understanding and tolerance for other cultures.

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

- 4.6 Pastoral care and arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent and contribute effectively to the quality of their personal development. The school's aim of caring for each pupil is met very successfully. Visitors to the school are treated politely and with consideration by pupils.
- 4.7 Systems for pastoral care are well established, with form teachers being the first point of contact for pupils with any concerns. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire pupils said that they are very well cared for and that their teachers help them with any problems connected to work. Staff know their pupils well and are good role models. Pupils find staff approachable; they say that they are listened to carefully. The excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils themselves, add significantly to the quality of pastoral care.
- 4.8 The school has highly effective policies and procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. Pupils understand the system of rewards and punishments and the weekly awards of stars for good work and behaviour in assembly are eagerly awaited. In interviews, pupils commented that bullying was rare and were confident that, if it did occur, it would be dealt with appropriately.
- 4.9 Policies and practices for health and safety are comprehensive and efficient. A detailed safeguarding policy is compliant and implemented successfully. Staff training for child protection is regular.
- 4.10 Measures to ensure protection against fire are thorough. All fire prevention appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. Detailed risk assessments are in place for educational visits and for other health and safety matters. The purpose-built medical room provides comfortable provision for pupils who are taken ill during the school day. All staff have first aid qualifications, including the appropriate number of paediatric qualifications in the pre-prep. Suitable provision is made to plan for those with disabilities, including pupils with LDD. Attendance and admission registers are completed and stored correctly.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy by developing good eating habits and taking regular exercise. They are keen to participate in physical exercise and take advantage of the many opportunities provided for them in games, PE lessons, and extra-curricular sporting activities. Meals taken at lunchtime are excellent and enjoyed by all.

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

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

- 5.1 Governance is excellent and provides thorough support for the school and its aims. The caring involvement of the governing body fully reflects the ethos and aspirations of the school. Since the last inspection the quality of governance has significantly improved through greater and more focused involvement in many aspects of school life. Governors have a clear vision for the future of the school and of their role. They provide very effective oversight of financial matters so that appropriate staffing levels are maintained and resources and premises are sufficient and up to date. Following recommendations from the previous inspection the governing body has ensured that ICT provision has been updated and that pupils are given more learning support with an additional specialist teacher.
- 5.2 Governors have a wide range of skills and extend their expertise by the use of outside consultants, for example in legal matters, when necessary. They have regular and carefully chosen training. A comprehensive system of five committees and the involvement of individual governors in different sections of the school help the governing body to have a thorough understanding of its activities. Governors are appointed to liaise with the EYFS and the learning support department. The excellent quality of their annual self-evaluation and monitoring ensures that they remain effective and able to help the school to move forwards. Frequent visits to the school enable governors to meet staff and parents and listen to their views.
- 5.3 Governance is highly effective in ensuring that it fulfils its legal obligations for welfare, health and safety and child protection. School policies are regularly reviewed and discussed. A governor responsible for safeguarding makes regular visits and checks procedures before reporting back to a committee. The health and safety audit carried out by an external consultant annually is carefully read and noted.
- 5.4 Parents say that they are very happy with governance and staff consider that they are given good support.

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

- 5.5 Leadership and management are good with some excellent features. The school is highly successful in fulfilling its aims of providing a caring community, educating pupils to a high standard and in preparing them for the next stage of their education. In response to recommendations from the previous inspection, development planning, monitoring, appraisal and teachers' professional development have all been improved. Policies are up to date and implemented well.
- 5.6 The school benefits from strong leadership in all areas, including the EYFS, with a clear vision for the future of the school. Management structures are clearly defined. The senior management team has leaders from each part of the school so that staff and pupils throughout the school are well supported. This results in good teaching and learning, and excellent personal development and pastoral care. Departments, senior management and the whole staff hold regular meetings that are carefully minuted. The senior management team carries out annual self-evaluation but its effectiveness is reduced, as it is not closely linked to the development plan, with the result that priorities for development are not always clear. Department development

planning is excellent in some cases, but is variable in quality and style and links to whole school development planning are not always included. Monitoring and assessment of teaching are excellent in some subjects and areas but less effective in others, limiting opportunities for subject development and for raising the standard of the pupils' achievements.

- 5.7 Staff are well qualified and have clear job descriptions. All new staff receive a thorough induction that includes safeguarding and welfare, and health and safety training. Overall, staff are supported well in their professional development. The appraisal system is in the process of being improved further in order to make it more effective. Staff training is regular and covers the needs of the school in supporting pupils, as well as those of the individual teacher.
- 5.8 A strength of the school is the importance it attaches to the welfare of its pupils. This is evident in the ethos of the school and its strong feeling of community and happy pupils. Management is fully aware of its responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and carries these out very effectively. Senior staff are trained in safer recruitment and all new staff and governor appointments are carefully checked for suitability with checks recorded in a well-maintained register.

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

- 5.9 The school maintains excellent links with parents, guardians and carers as it successfully fulfils its aims of providing a caring community in which each child's talents are nurtured in preparation for the next stage of education. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents said that they are extremely pleased with the education provided, the progress their children make, and the high standards of behaviour, along with good values that the school encourages.
- 5.10 Since the previous inspection communication with parents has been significantly improved and they say that they can communicate easily with the school. Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school. New parents are given helpful information, with booklets provided in the EYFS and further up the school. Staff are readily available for parents and the head operates an 'open door' policy. An informative website is updated regularly and parent mail efficiently enables quick communication. A homework diary, regular parents' meetings, and newsletters sent three times each term ensure that parents are involved in their children's progress and activities in the school. Parents frequently attend inter-school sports matches, concerts, plays and pre-prep assemblies. Some go on day trips with pupils and others give talks to different sections of the school. An active parents association helps to raise money for charity and the school by organising a variety of events during the year for children, staff and parents. A few parents raised concerns about not being encouraged to be involved in the life of the school, but the inspection team found that there are numerous opportunities for involvement.
- 5.11 Full reports are sent to parents twice a year for all pupils and each half-term a report with effort and attainments grades is sent. Reports contain good detail of work covered and the pupils' achievement and effort. The best reports contain information to help pupils improve further but this is not always consistently included. A few parents were less satisfied with information given about their children's progress or considered that too much work was given to be done at home. Inspection findings did not concur with these points but agreed with the many highly positive responses from parents.

5.12 A clear complaints policy is provided but rarely used as any parental concerns are dealt with quickly and carefully. Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any complaint and they are happy to report that the school listens to their concerns.

**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. The setting is effective in knowing and valuing each child as a unique individual so that their needs are met successfully. Teaching challenges and enthuses children, encouraging confidence and an eagerness to learn. Since the last inspection the provision has been improved to widen and enrich children's experience. Parents value the friendly, caring atmosphere and the standards their children achieve. The setting is successful in achieving its aims and has good capacity for improvement.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed head of the EYFS has a clear ambition to improve the provision and increase integration of staff across the setting. This aims to ensure that all work together in curriculum planning to the benefit of the children and to achieve full integration with the whole school. Policies and procedures including risk assessments are comprehensive, and successfully implemented, thus ensuring the children's safety and well-being as well as promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. Record keeping is detailed, but there is little standardised formal assessment at present so that the children's progress over time is hard to measure. Effective links with outside agencies and schools offer valued support for staff, and parents appreciate the close contact they have with the school. Parents and other adults are welcomed into school to share their experiences with the children. The extensive range of good quality resources promotes good and often stimulating opportunities for children to learn independently both indoors and outside.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is good. Staff have high expectations of children and use successful strategies which encourage them to behave politely, and to be friendly and considerate of others. The quality of teaching is good and often outstanding across the setting. Observational assessment is used to good effect to identify the children's next steps and to modify planning. The curriculum is well balanced, with good opportunities for child-initiated learning involving choosing, exploring and discovering, in addition to activities led by staff. There is specialist teaching in French and swimming. Reception and Nursery classrooms are bright, cheerful and inviting. The outside area is adequate for the present number of children and is used effectively in most weathers but lacks a covered area, thus reducing its overall usefulness. Staff assiduously promote the welfare and safety of children, and the calm orderly daily routines create an atmosphere in which children feel secure and thrive.



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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children in the EYFS are good. They enjoy learning and respond positively to their teachers' expectations. Children show good understanding of number and great enthusiasm to practise their reading skills. By the end of the EYFS the majority of children attain the early learning goals in all six areas of learning and some exceed them, although the absence of assessment on entry to the Nursery makes it difficult to judge children's overall progress. Children are confident, and their personal development is good. They understand the importance of being safe, healthy eating and good hygiene. Their communication skills are above expected levels for this age; they share, take turns, form happy friendships and are courteous and considerate of others. The children are well prepared for the next step in their education.

**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 Anthea Hickman

Mr Michael Connolly

Mrs Judith Scotcher

Mrs Jenny Clayphan

Reporting Inspector

Head, IAPS school

Former Head, GSA junior school

EYFS Co-ordinating Inspector