



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BLACKHEATH NURSERY AND PREPARATORY SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Blackheath Nursery and Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Blackheath Nursery and Preparatory School		
DfE Number	203/6114		
Registered Charity Number	312732		
Address	Blackheath Nursery and Preparatory School 4 St German's Place Blackheath London SE3 0NJ		
Telephone Number	020 8858 0692		
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Email Address	penny.thompson@blackheathprepschool.com		
Head	Mrs P J Thompson		
Chair of Governors	Mr H Stallard		
Age Range	3 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	366		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (184 boys; 182 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	59	5-11: 307
Number of Day Pupils	366		
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs M Forbes		
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 January 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 Blackheath Nursery and Preparatory School is a selective co-educational independent day school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. It occupies a five-acre site close to Blackheath village, overlooking the Heath and close to Greenwich Park. The school was founded in 1996, and was originally part of Christ's College boys' school founded in 1823. As the school has grown and the curriculum expanded, the original Georgian and Victorian buildings have been extended, adapted and additional accommodation built; the most recent additions are a multi-purpose hall, gymnasium, dining room and music suite. The school is a charity administered by a company limited by guarantee trust. The members of the board of governors are trustees of the charity and directors of the company. Although the school has a Christian foundation, it accepts pupils of all faiths and of none. The current head was appointed in 2006.
- 1.2 The school has a total of 366 pupils with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. Of these, 110 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and 59 attend part-time. The Nursery and Reception classrooms are close to one another and both have their own outside play areas. Pupils are drawn mainly from the surrounding area and come from families with a range of social, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Parental expectations are high.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide an environment in which pupils flourish and grow up to be happy, thoughtful, confident and responsible young people. It promotes high levels of academic, dramatic, musical and sporting achievement within a context of sensitive and well co-ordinated pastoral care.
- 1.4 Admission is based on the school's own selection procedures. The overall ability range of pupils is above the national average, with most pupils' ability being above or far above average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 22 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom 17 receive specialist learning support. Two pupils do not have English as their principal language and one receives extra support. Almost all pupils are successful in securing a place at their first choice of senior school and a high proportion are awarded scholarships.
- 1.5 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 From the EYFS, pupils have a high quality of educational experience which resonates with the school's aims. High standards of achievement in academic work are also reflected in a wide range of activities. Pupils are successful in all aspects of their learning and are efficiently prepared for transfer to senior school. They achieve considerable success in senior school entrance examinations, and many achieve awards each year. The pupils' development is strongly supported by the broad curriculum. Well developed skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) contribute to pupils' good and frequently exceptional progress over time. The extra-curricular programme offers an extensive range of opportunities, in which the great majority of pupils participate. Pupils' achievements are strongly supported by lively, knowledgeable teaching, frequently of excellent quality. Pupils enjoy learning, are attentive, concentrate well and from an early age demonstrate their ability to work independently, reason and think for themselves.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is outstanding and supported by excellent pastoral care, welfare arrangements and rigorously implemented health and safety procedures. Pupils thrive in a happy, caring and purposeful atmosphere. From the EYFS, pupils grow in confidence and the school buzzes with enjoyment. Pupils say they are proud to be at this school.
- 2.3 Governance of good quality ensures the school's aims are central to its work. Governors have arrangements in place to oversee the work of the school and are ambitious for its continuing success. They are knowledgeable about the school, and provide good support and appropriate challenge. The premises and grounds have been imaginatively developed and are well maintained. Leadership and management at all levels are excellent, with robust policies and procedures supporting the smooth running of the school. As yet, the potential of management information systems is less well developed. The school promotes good links with parents. The replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire reflected a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of school life. Parents singled out for particular mention the quality of teaching, the curriculum and extra-curricular programme, easy access to information about the school and the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views. A small number of parents said they did not receive enough information on their child's progress and others said their concerns had not been handled well but inspection evidence does not support these views. The school has addressed successfully the recommendations of the previous inspection in 2004. It has reviewed the balance of the curriculum, developed a programme to monitor teaching and introduced a management framework to support the developing needs of the school.

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 2003, as subsequently amended.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, the school was required to:
- provide parents with a summary of their child's progress against the Early Learning Goals within the final term of the EYFS.

Since the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is inspected under a different system of regulation, within a two-day limit, the report cannot mention any regulatory deficiencies which are remedied by the end of the standard inspection.

(ii) Recommended action

- 2.6 In addition to rectifying the weakness in meeting regulatory requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop fully the potential of management information systems to support the work of the school.
 2. Evaluate and reduce the over-reliance on worksheets in Knowledge and Understanding of the World for children in the EYFS.

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 school does not enter pupils for national tests, but results in standardised assessments indicate that at every stage their performance is excellent when compared with the national average for all maintained schools. Pupils make exceptional progress over time in relation to their ability profile, which is above the national average.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, pupils achieve well. The high standards attained in academic work are reflected in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and effectively fulfil the school's aims.
- 3.3 Pupils demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding. Their ICT skills and creative abilities are well developed and they thoroughly enjoy investigative work in science. From an early age, they can reason well and think for themselves. Interpretation and critical thinking are particularly well developed in all subjects. Pupils have excellent literacy and numeracy skills and their reading is advanced for their age. They are articulate, and express themselves with confidence both orally and in their written work. Pupils have a secure grasp of mathematics and they show a logical and enquiring approach to problem solving by actively seeking solutions. The presentation of work is of a high standard, demonstrating effort, enthusiasm and determination. By the end of the EYFS most pupils have exceeded the Early Learning Goals. Older pupils are highly successful in gaining entry to senior schools, with a significant number achieving scholarships to those that are selective.
- 3.4 In extra-curricular activities, individual and team achievements are excellent and they are indicative of hard work, perseverance and the quality of teaching and coaching. Pupils are outstandingly successful in the Primary Mathematics Challenge and the chess team is currently the Kent schools' champion. They are successful at local and regional levels in a range of sports including cricket, football, netball and rounders. Pupils say they are proud that they have so many opportunities to represent their school. They are successful in grade examinations in music, speech and drama and many achieve merits and distinctions. In a Year 3 strings concert during the inspection, the group gave a highly competent performance of music from a *Jungle Theme* with passion and enjoyment.
- 3.5 Pupils' achievement is supported by excellent attitudes to learning. They make good and frequently exceptional progress over time in relation to their above average ability. High levels of intellectual curiosity were evident in many lessons. Pupils are confident, creative and inquisitive learners. They enjoy learning, are attentive, concentrate well and work well individually as well as contributing productively in pairs and in groups.

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

- 3.6 The curriculum and the extra-curricular programmes are excellent and support the school in meeting its aims. They make a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' achievement and their personal development.
- 3.7 The curriculum is challenging, broad, suitably balanced and appropriate to the abilities and differing needs of pupils at every stage. It prepares pupils well for the senior school entrance examinations of selective independent and grammar schools. The curriculum effectively covers all the required areas of learning. All subjects of the national curriculum are included together with French, German, Spanish, religious education (RE) and drama. Considerable emphasis is placed on English, mathematics and science. Drama, music and sport feature strongly and support pupils' creative and physical development. High standards of academic achievement are supported by specialist teaching; this begins in the Nursery in French, music, dance and physical education, and increases from Reception, when ICT and drama are added, until, by Year 4, almost all subjects are taught by specialists. Throughout the school, a full programme of off-site activities, visits, museum and theatre outings and visiting speakers, including the Year 4 visit to an outdoor education centre, the Year 5 visit to a sailing centre on the Isle of Wight and the Year 6 residential trip to France, enrich the curriculum. The school has satisfactorily addressed the recommendation contained in the previous inspection report by reviewing the balance of the curriculum. Design and technology (DT) and drama are now taught in Years 1 to 6.
- 3.8 The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure continuity and progression across the years. Pupils' individual abilities are well understood. Pupils with LDD and those with English as an additional language receive excellent support to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. Individual education plans are shared with staff who include suitable provision for these pupils in their regular lesson planning. Extension tasks for the more able pupils are routinely planned in most subjects. The placing of pupils into ability groups from Years 3 to 6 for mathematics, enables them to achieve high standards for their ages. Curriculum days and themed weeks, the most recent being India Week, offer opportunities for the whole school to be involved in cross-curricular learning and challenge pupils to explore and find things out for themselves.
- 3.9 Extra-curricular provision is extensive and a strength of the school. A good balance of sport, music and drama, together with activities to challenge pupils with a wide range of interests, is on offer. Clubs such as Horrible History, Green Fingers, circus skills, master chef, chess, sketching and origami are among the many which pupils enjoy. The problem solving mathematics group develops thinking and number skills. Music groups include a wind band, strings orchestra, choirs and a rock band. Pupils participate enthusiastically in clubs and activities and these enhance their educational experience. Close links with the community are maintained through the local football league club, church groups and charities which support underprivileged children. Guest speakers visit and give talks on such topics the Mounted Police and the British Legion. The school's success in reducing the number of cars coming to school, by encouraging walking, cycling or using a scooter, has been recognised with the award of accredited status and a grant by Transport for London which the school has used for a cycle shed.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 Knowledgeable, stimulating and effective teaching, much of which is excellent, makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress and the achievement of high standards. It fully supports the aims of the school. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost all parents said teaching helps their child to make progress.
- 3.11 Teaching is effective in providing a secure foundation for pupils to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop their skills. Teachers have high expectations and they enthuse pupils with a love of learning. They know the capabilities of individual pupils, and use this information to engage and interest them in lessons and capture their imaginations. Significant features include investigation work in mathematics and science lessons and methods in English that foster interest and encourage the use of initiative and imagination to develop independent learning skills. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect and this adds to the pupils' enjoyment of the subjects being studied.
- 3.12 Pupils' achievements are strongly promoted by well informed, thoughtfully planned teaching. Teaching uses a variety of approaches to create an atmosphere in which pupils of all abilities are challenged intellectually and encouraged to take greater responsibility for their work. Support for pupils with LDD is of high quality. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and time is used efficiently. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. The school has satisfactorily addressed the recommendations contained in the previous inspection report by developing a consistent programme of monitoring teaching throughout the school. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 now matches that of the rest of the school.
- 3.13 Teachers are well qualified, secure in their subject knowledge and teach with confidence. Resources are used effectively to ensure that tasks and activities match different learning styles. Since the last inspection, the library has been relocated to a central position and the stock supports independent research. It is regularly used as a resource to support learning through research and reading. The improving provision for ICT is giving teachers more opportunities to incorporate its use into their teaching. The gymnasium, together with the grounds and pitches, which are well maintained, provides high quality facilities for teaching and learning.
- 3.14 Rigorous assessment systems ensure that the progress of each pupil is monitored and teachers use information from assessments to guide planning. The headmistress and senior management team (SMT) work collaboratively in monitoring the work of pupils in all subjects. Good use is made of standardised test information to provide an understanding of pupil attainment and to identify those pupils whose achievement or approach to work falters. Constructive marking gives pupils encouragement and frequently makes suggestions on how work can be improved. As yet, the school does not use ICT to maximise access to assessment data and to simplify tracking of pupils' progress.

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 pupils' personal development is excellent. In line with the school's aims, pupils thrive in a happy, friendly, purposeful atmosphere and feel they are progressing well at school. They grow in confidence and adopt a responsible attitude to learning. From the EYFS onwards, the school buzzes with enjoyment and pupils take pride in their own and others' achievements.
- 4.2 Pupils develop good spiritual awareness which is shown in their lively artistic and creative displays and their participation in a variety of musical and cultural events. Pupils are self-aware and secure in their own identity. They grow in self-confidence and self-knowledge through the united, friendly school community and broad range of opportunities it provides. Spiritual development is fostered in assemblies in which all faiths, as well as Christian, are acknowledged and valued. The recently revised imaginative RE scheme of work takes a dual approach to learning about, and learning from, different faiths. Together with the revised personal, social and health education (PSHE) scheme of work, pupils gain an insight into values and beliefs and how they affect people's lives. Assemblies acknowledge individual and team achievements of all kinds and this appreciation builds pupils' self-esteem.
- 4.3 The quality of pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a strong sense of fair-play and can distinguish between right and wrong from an early age. They understand and support the high standards of behaviour expected of them and appreciate their actions may have consequences for others. Pupils are encouraged to be confident and positive contributors to their community locally, nationally and internationally through charity work. Local charities which have been supported most recently include Demelza House for Children, St Thomas' Hospital, Evelina Hospital for Children, Foal Farm and London Wildlife Trust. The newly formed school council is already playing an important role in school life by encouraging pupils to be responsible, outward looking citizens.
- 4.4 Pupils' social awareness and development is excellent, and owes much to the way in which they are encouraged to be caring and responsible members of the community. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and for others, for example as monitors, house officers, team captains and, in Year 6, as prefects. Pupils are polite to visitors and at ease when talking to them. Through participation in the house system, and notably through inter-house competitions, pupils develop leadership skills and the ability to work as a team. In the wider context, pupils have a developing understanding of public institutions and services in England. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about the political debate in which they engaged at the time of the recent general election.
- 4.5 Pupils have a strong appreciation of the origins and practices of their own and other cultures, and appreciate racial and cultural diversity. The recent India week provided an inspirational insight into Indian traditions and ways of life. It initiated some excellent work in art and music. Pupils learn about other cultures in geography, history, modern languages, music and art. Through developing links with a school in Malawi pupils understanding of different cultures is being extended and developed.

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

- 4.6 Underpinning pupils' achievements and their personal development are excellent pastoral care and arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety, which are rigorously implemented. The caring, friendly atmosphere created by staff enables the school to meet its aims of providing an environment in which pupils flourish and grow up to be happy, thoughtful, confident and responsible young people.
- 4.7 Form teachers provide excellent support and guidance for pupils in a wide range of activities. Pupils are well known and any academic or pastoral concerns are given a high priority and followed up promptly.
- 4.8 In the close-knit school community, relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils say they are well cared for and this gives them the confidence to turn to an adult should they have a problem with which they need help.
- 4.9 Staff are overwhelmingly committed to the well-being of pupils and the promotion of good behaviour. Pupils almost always treat one another with respect and courtesy. Pupils say bullying is rare and that staff deal with it quickly and constructively when it occurs. They understand the reward system, which includes the awarding of house points, and they know the sanctions for misbehaviour which, they said, are rarely used.
- 4.10 The safeguarding arrangements are thorough. All staff have had appropriate training and the robust child protection policy is implemented successfully. The necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are held and staff have received training. Health and safety procedures are effective, with risk assessments covering all aspects of school life. Electrical testing is carried out and the health and safety documentation is comprehensive. The facilities for pupils who are ill at school are good. A satisfactory number of staff have up-to-date first aid qualifications. Accidents are properly recorded and careful records are kept of the administration of medication. The accessibility plan outlines the improvements the school intends to make to the provision for those with disabilities. Pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet and having regular physical exercise. 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 The quality of governance is good. It successfully ensures the school's aims are central to its work and it supports pupils' high standards of achievement and excellent personal development. Since the previous inspection, the school has made significant progress and governors have a strong strategic vision for the school's continuing development and future success. They are aware that the objectives of the school as expressed in the Memorandum and Articles of Association do not reflect the purpose of the school as it is today and a review is being made.
- 5.2 The Board has addressed the recommendation of the previous inspection to review the membership of the governing body, and is now benefiting from the introduction of a wider range of skills and professional knowledge amongst its members. The induction arrangements for new governors have been strengthened, and training on governors' responsibilities has been included in half-day strategy planning meetings.
- 5.3 The Board has developed a sub-committee structure to oversee the work of the school. Governors effectively discharge their responsibilities for child protection, as well as for pupils' welfare, health and safety. However, their responsibilities for monitoring the work of the school are at an early stage of development. They are well informed about the life and work of the school through visits and regular reports from the headmistress and the head of finance and premises, enabling them to give support and stimulus for growth and improvement.
- 5.4 Governors are closely involved with financial and strategic planning. They maintain a high level of staffing and ensure the school has the accommodation and resources necessary to meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent and wholly in line with the school's aims to achieve high academic standards through stimulating teaching, challenging expectations and first class resources. The school has addressed fully the recommendation of the previous inspection to ensure that the management framework at all levels fully meets the school's needs for the next stage in its development.
- 5.6 The headmistress and members of the SMT have complementary skills and set a tone that benefits the whole school community. They provide a caring and clear sense of direction and exercise their management role effectively across the whole range of school activities. A strong feature of management is the desire to provide a high quality of education that enriches the lives of each pupil and gives them the confidence to face the challenges they will meet in senior school. Heads of department manage their subjects effectively and monitor the quality of teaching. They set a good example by their commitment to hard work.
- 5.7 Development planning demonstrates that the school has a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for development. It complements the governors' strategic plan. Departmental development plans are of high quality and set out specific areas for educational improvement. All staff are involved in self-evaluation and the

development planning process, and this clarity of vision is reflected in the quality of pupils' achievement and personal development.

- 5.8 Whole-school policies, which are reviewed regularly, demonstrate the school's commitment to high standards. They provide practical and achievable guidance and are implemented successfully by staff. The school is aware that it does not currently make sufficient use of management information systems to support the management of the school data.
- 5.9 The systems in place for securing, inducting, supporting and developing staff ensure a good balance of high quality staff with a range of expertise, age and experience. All staff working with children are appropriately checked through the school's recruitment procedures. Appraisal and in-service training are regular features of staff development and the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils are given high priority. All members of staff have received the required training. The central register of appointments is properly maintained.
- 5.10 Teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. The school's sense of community is further enhanced by the friendliness and efficiency of the administrative team, the effective work of the caterers and of the strength of other non-teaching staff who are dedicated to the pupils' well-being.

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

- 5.11 The relationship between the school and parents, including in the EYFS, is good and strongly supports the academic and personal development of pupils in accordance with its aims.
- 5.12 Responses of parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the education provided. They singled out for particular praise the curriculum and extra-curricular provision, pastoral care, high standards of behaviour, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views and easy access to information about the school and its policies. Almost every parent acknowledged that teaching helped their child to make progress. A small number of parents said that they did not receive enough information about their child's progress and that their concerns had not been handled well. The inspectors found that the 'open door' policy of the school provides parents with the opportunity to discuss progress with teachers at any time. Additionally, parents can speak with form teachers informally about difficulties as they arise. Concerns that are made in writing to the headmistress are treated in accordance with the complaints procedure.
- 5.13 Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. They are regularly invited into school to attend school functions including assemblies, drama performances and concerts. They accompany school trips and occasionally speak about an interest or hobby with pupils. The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association is an active body organising social and fund raising events which are well attended. More recently they have successfully introduced the 'Alumni' programme. The school also organises a breakfast club which is attended by pupils of all ages and encourages a happy and convivial start to the day.

- 5.14 During two parent-teacher meetings each year, parents have the opportunity to discuss the work and progress of their children. Annual reports, together with autumn term grade cards in Years 3 to 6, keep parents informed about the work and progress of their children. Reports give an indication of a pupil's achievement and attitude to learning but few subjects give specific guidance on what pupils need to do to improve.
- 5.15 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school. The comprehensive parents' handbook provides information for parents of pupils new to the school. The twice-termly newsletter *Headlines* is a cheerful leaflet with news about the school and the achievements of pupils. Around the school, well-placed notice boards provide important reminders to parents. The comprehensive website provides easy access to information about the school and the new parent e-mail system ensures information is distributed efficiently and rapidly.

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. Highly effective teaching nurtures and challenges lively independent minds and promotes confidence and an eagerness to learn. Every child is treated as a valued and unique individual. The caring environment and the strong partnerships with parents, who describe the setting as providing a family atmosphere with high standards but without stress or pressure, provide children with a secure start to their education. Since the previous inspection the curriculum in the reception classes has been revised to prepare children more effectively for the next stage of their learning. No area of the last Ofsted report was identified as needing improvement. The setting is successful in achieving its aims to enable children to realise their potential in a safe and happy environment.

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

6.2 The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Leaders and managers have a strong sense of purpose and an ambition for excellence. They are committed to continuous improvement and the maintenance of the current high standards. Records, policies and procedures support efficient management and have a strong emphasis on achievement, personal development and well-being. These are supported by reflective self-evaluation and clear development plans. Provision for children's welfare is robust, including in matters of safeguarding. Effective links with external agencies, including the local authority, offer valued support for staff. The outdoor areas are in constant use. Resources both indoors and outside are plentiful, of good quality and used skilfully to promote children's learning.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. The staff's thorough understanding of the EYFS framework ensures they are confident in helping children to learn. The curriculum is well balanced and greatly enhanced by high quality specialist teaching in French, music and PE. However, there is an over reliance on worksheets in some areas of learning. Regular assessment ensures that adults have a thorough knowledge of each child's stage of development, and this information is used well to plan learning activities that focus on individual needs leading to exceptionally good progress. Excellent balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities involving choosing, exploring and discovering. This enables children to develop as independent learners who can make decisions and organise themselves well. The setting is aware that it does not at present report children's progress to parents against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the EYFS. Staff actively promote the welfare and safety of children and the well run, calm, orderly 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 outstanding. Children make significant gains in their learning and have consistently good and often excellent levels of achievement. By the end of the EYFS, children have achieved and many have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. They respond well to the high expectations of staff and are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their learning. They can share, take turns and have outstanding social and communication skills. They listen keenly, answer questions enthusiastically and are confident to make reasoned guesses. Children understand about being safe, healthy eating and the need for good hygiene. They form happy friendships and are courteous and considerate of one another.

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 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 Margaret Banks	Reporting Inspector
Mr Clive Holder	Team Inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Andrew Nott	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Bridget Windley	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector