



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

FINAL VISIT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Christopher's School

Full Name of School/College	St Christopher's School		
DCSF Number	304/6057		
Address	St Christopher's School 71 Wembley Park Drive Wembley Middlesex HA9 8HE		
Telephone Number	020 8902 5069		
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Email Address	stchris@happychild.co.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs Alison McNeill		
Proprietor	Miss Tracey Storey		
Age Range	4 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	59		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (38 boys; 21 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 52
	3-5 (EYFS):	7	11-18: 0
Number of Day Pupils	59	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	0
Number of Boarders	Total:	0	
EYFS Gender	Mixed (4 boys; 3 girls)		
Inspection date/EYFS	26 Jan 2010 to 27 Jan 2010		
Final (team) visit	22 Feb 2010 to 24 Feb 2010		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It 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 St Christopher's School is an independent day school for boys and girls from four to eleven years of age. It aims fully to realise the educational potential of its pupils academically, socially, artistically and physically. It seeks to encourage in them a sense of personal responsibility and individual worth within a caring multi-cultural community.
- 1.2 Set in an adapted Edwardian house in a residential street in Wembley, the school was established in 1928 as a Christian foundation. It is now one of a group of schools and nurseries owned by Happy Child Limited, and caters for pupils of any or of no faith. Happy Child Limited was purchased by an investment company in 2007 and its schools are overseen by its managing director. The school has no governing body. The headmistress, previously deputy headmistress, became acting headmistress in October 2009 and took up her post in January 2010.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection numbers stood at fifty-nine, of whom thirty-eight were boys and twenty-one girls. Of these, seven were from four to five years of age and the remaining fifty-two were from five to eleven years of age. Because of the recent decline in numbers, the school was operating temporarily without a Year 6 and without a deputy.
- 1.4 The school is not selective. On the basis of the standardised tests taken at the end of Year 6, the overall ability is above average and many pupils are well above average. In the lower part of the school the range of ability is wider, though still above average overall. If pupils are achieving in line with their abilities, results will be above or well above the national average for all maintained primary schools. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Two receive individual support with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) related to dyslexia, and three speak English as a second language and receive support from their class teachers.
- 1.5 Pupils come from parents in a variety of business, professional and other walks of life in families supportive of their children's education.
- 1.6 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 St Christopher's School largely meets its aims. Pupils make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and make particularly good progress in their literacy and numeracy, so that they obtain good results in relation to their abilities in national tests and succeed in their entrance tests to selective and other schools of their first choice. Pupils have extensive subject and general knowledge, but their progress in specific skills varies through the school because curricular planning and co-ordination are underdeveloped. Pupils usually work hard, write well, think for themselves, organise research and work co-operatively with others. Occasionally some lose concentration, when planning and organisation are unsatisfactory. Marking is thorough and helpful to pupils, particularly those in need of support, but the ablest are not consistently challenged. The school uses assessment data effectively to plan for individual needs but is only just beginning to use it to monitor standards.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is good and, as at the last inspection, closely reflects the family atmosphere to which the school aspires. This is because of the high quality of relationships and the care teachers take in looking after their pupils. Serious lapses in safety and safer recruitment at the time of the initial visit have now been remedied. Pupils are confident and are aware of their own and others' feelings. They like their school and value its social life and the closely supportive contact between older and younger pupils that the ethos and small size of the school affords. They are well behaved and respect the difference between right and wrong. The understanding which pupils show of their own and each other's diverse faiths and cultures is outstanding.
- 2.3 The proprietor satisfactorily oversees the education and care provided and supports the new headmistress effectively. However, systems for ensuring all safety checks and recruitment checks had been properly conducted were found wanting, although they were quickly put right. Leadership and management are uneven, but overall are satisfactory. Achievement has been maintained and in some respects improved. However, key recommendations about planning, the delegation of curricular responsibility, and the establishment of systematic review and development planning are only now beginning to be undertaken. Parents were aware of this and have welcomed the changes made by the new headmistress. They strongly valued the ethos, relationships and accessibility of the school and its teachers, and the support provided for their children. Pupils said they liked the school and felt well supported by the teachers, both academically and pastorally. The main concerns of both parents and pupils related to the lack of computers and other resources in the classrooms, and the lack of any grassed or soft area in the tarmac playground.

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:
- ensure that the designated safeguarding person receives the required inter-agency training and that recruitment procedures are effectively co-ordinated and fully in line with the statutory guidance *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* [Regulation 3.(2)(b), under Welfare, Health and Safety];
 - implement all parts of the school's policy for fire safety [Regulation 3.(5), under Welfare, Health and Safety];
 - maintain all the daily registers of attendance in accordance with requirements [Regulation 3.(9), under Welfare, Health and Safety];
 - ensure that all required recruitment checks are carried out and recorded in the centralised register of appointments [Regulations 4.(2)(a) to (c), 4C.(2)(b) and (e), 4C.(3) and 4C.(7), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified almost all of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report. However, the following requirements remain unresolved, and therefore the school must:
- complete the booked inter-agency training for the designated child protection person and ensure that the revised recruitment procedures are effectively co-ordinated and fully in line with the statutory guidance *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* [Regulation 3.(2)(b) under Welfare, Health and Safety].
- 2.6 In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- implement all parts of the safeguarding policy [See Regulation 3.(2)(b) above].

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

- 2.7 In addition to rectifying the weaknesses in meeting regulatory requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve standards achieved in all subjects by:
 - developing the planning so that all schemes of work and short-term plans provide for the continuous development and assessment of the specific skills of each subject and cover all the areas recently outlined;
 - providing subject leaders with clear role descriptions and ensuring they carry them out effectively;
 - improving the consistency of good planning and teaching;
 - extending the good practice in challenging the more able;
 - making fuller analytic use of the ability and progress data available to pinpoint and work on specific areas of strength and weakness.
 2. Improve the governance and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that all policies and procedures, particularly those related to safeguarding and health and safety are fully and consistently implemented;
 - introducing a formal cycle of review and development planning, involving all staff in the process and consulting with pupils and parents.
 3. Improve the outside provision for the EYFS to provide wider opportunities for children to learn, and in general provide a grassed area for all pupils.
 4. Improve resources for information and communication technology (ICT) within 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 Pupils achieve well and are highly educated for their ages. They are diligent and enthusiastic learners, able to think and study for themselves, so that they leave the school well informed about the world in which they live and thoroughly prepared for the next stages of their lives and education. Achievements and progress observed in lessons and in different subjects varied between outstanding and unsatisfactory, but were good overall and so an improvement on the previous inspection and largely in line with the school's aims. The greatest strength lies in pupils' command of literacy, numeracy and ICT, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as a second language make particularly good progress. The area of comparative weakness is progress in the specific skills of the arts, science and humanities, particularly in relation to more able pupils. Overall standards have improved since the inspection of 2004.
- 3.2 Children in the Reception class make a good and confident start to their education and enjoy a smooth transition to Year 1. From Reception throughout the school, pupils, including those with English as a second language, have excellent speaking and listening skills, with a wide vocabulary, and are able to speak and discuss clearly and cogently with each other and with adults, because they are encouraged to ask their own questions and to respond at length. Their writing is extensive, well presented, varied in its genre and purpose, and shows application of individual reasoning and imagination. The quantity and range are appropriately graduated between pupils of different abilities. Pupils relish books and their enjoyment of reading is clear from the perceptive book reviews many of them keep. Pupils in Year 3 loved Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant* and used it as the basis for producing their own story books for younger children.
- 3.3 In the wider curriculum, progress varies from class to class. It is at its best in pupils' extensive knowledge of content; pupils in Year 5 showed a thorough understanding of the circulation of oxygenated blood to the muscles. As the school has identified, progress in the specific skills varies and was good where taught by specialist co-ordinators, but was uneven elsewhere. In all lessons, pupils with LDD made good progress because of the support they received. Progress by the more able, though good overall, varied because in some lessons they were working at the level of the rest of the class.
- 3.4 Pupils mostly enjoy their work and appreciate the support they receive from their teachers. They work hard and are attentive and well behaved, except in the few cases where weak planning and organisation led a few to lose concentration and become restless. They are good at co-operating in pairs and small groups, solving problems together with mature seriousness.
- 3.5 Attainment in national tests is excellent in English and mathematics and high in science, and represents good progress overall and an improvement since 2004, especially in science. Because of the preparation they receive, pupils consistently obtain entry to the schools of their choice, many to selective schools. In addition, pupils have many achievements in other areas; many achieved English Schools' Athletic Association gold, silver or bronze awards for a variety of events. Six pupils achieved grade five for violin or piano at the school.

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

- 3.6 The school makes satisfactory provision for the development and education of all its pupils. The planning of the EYFS, the provision of speech and drama for all pupils and the use of outside resources to enrich pupils' learning are good features. The uneven quality and detail of the planning and the limited monitoring by co-ordinators are weaknesses, as at the inspection of 2004. The balance struck between academic, aesthetic and physical development is good.
- 3.7 The Reception curriculum covers all the Early Learning Goals in a balanced way. Pupils are helped to make a smooth transition into Year 1 through effective communication among the teachers concerned and through the weekly sessions shared by Reception and Year 1. A particular strength lies in the extensive use of visits to museums, galleries and theatres to deepen pupils' interest and understanding. From Years 1 to 5, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. It is appropriately enhanced by a range of activities, and is particularly rich in music. It also includes sport, Spanish, art and cookery. However, the time allocations for some of these are either awkwardly timed or rather brief. For example, some last for fifteen minutes at midday, while an instrumental ensemble before school was interrupted at intervals by pupils arriving and starting to play.
- 3.8 All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, plus French, personal, social and health education (PSHE), reasoning and ICT. The balance is, as in 2004, heavily weighted towards English and mathematics, but very effective in preparing pupils for success in entry to selective secondary schools of their choice. Provision for ICT has been improved through the introduction of specialist teaching, thoroughly integrated into the work pupils are doing in their other subjects. Speech and drama lessons contribute importantly to the development of memory and to the high quality of speaking skills.
- 3.9 The planning and management of the curriculum are uneven, though much work has been done to improve it in recent months. The planning of English, mathematics and ICT is detailed and supports the consistent development of skills according to ability. Schemes of work for other subjects are limited to topics to be covered. Text and course books have provided satisfactory coverage of the essential knowledge and concepts of the subjects, but have also contributed to patchy development of subject skills, such as scientific investigation. The school had recognised this and set improvements in hand.
- 3.10 Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities or with English as a second language are very well supported, because of the close individual attention and support that each pupil receives from the headmistress and teaching staff. The school relies on teachers and parents to identify needs, and the headmistress, acting as special educational needs co-ordinator, prepares and carefully monitors individual education plans, with which staff were fully conversant. This approach, despite its informality, works very effectively.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 Teachers support their pupils' learning and progress well and in some cases excellently. The most consistent strengths in the teaching are the individual attention and support given to each pupil both during and outside lessons and teachers' excellent knowledge of their pupils' abilities and needs. As at the inspection of 2004, support for the less able is more consistently good than the challenge for the most able, and subject knowledge and the quality and detail of planning are uneven.
- 3.12 Teachers consistently relate well to their pupils and make their lessons interesting and fun. They have high expectations of the amount and quality of work pupils should complete and carefully calibrate this to the capacity of each pupil. Because of their knowledge of their pupils, they are very good at helping individuals over a particularly difficult hurdle. Only occasionally were more able pupils given higher order challenges; in most cases the differences lay in the quantity and quality with which similar tasks were completed. In the best cases, especially in relation to the study of literature, intellectual expectations were high for all pupils. Teachers mark and correct pupils' work meticulously, offering consistently helpful comments and suggestions for improvements. However, further challenges to successful pupils are rare, and targets for improvement tend to focus on the mechanics of writing at the expense of the subject itself.
- 3.13 Teachers usually plan and organise their lessons thoroughly and many are good at involving pupils in their own learning and in engaging them in a variety of activities, including an element of self-assessment. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, the planning lacked detail and the management of pupils was insufficient, so that concentration waned and pupils became restless. Teachers make imaginative use of text books and other resources, particularly visits to museums and galleries. Where they are less familiar with a subject, they tend to concentrate on factual content at the expense of investigative and other skills specific to the subject.
- 3.14 Teachers and the school as a whole keep a wide range of data from assessment, including National Curriculum levels in many subjects, and reading and spelling ages. Teachers still employ their own different assessment schemes, some very detailed, others less so. This information is effectively analysed and used to identify the needs of individual pupils, but until the inspection, had not been gathered together to provide a systematic overview of the school's standards capable of informing priorities for improvement.

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 good in every way. Pupils at all stages in the school are articulate, considerate and well-informed young people, who relish the diversity of the community in which they are educated, confident that their own faiths and cultures are equally valued. They have a broad general knowledge for their ages of the institutions of government. The school fulfils its aims and has sustained the strengths noted in 2004.
- 4.2 Pupils are self-confident, with high self-esteem, aware of their own feelings and sensitive to the feelings of others. They show themselves poised and mature in conversation with adults. They demonstrate a broad and detailed understanding of all the major world faiths and proudly write about their own, often at great length. In some classes, religious education links belief with history and geography very effectively, for example in the study of Islam, in which the location, topography and importance of Mecca are well covered.
- 4.3 Pupils are almost always well behaved. They understand and respect the school's code of conduct and have a mature sense of right and wrong. Older pupils are encouraged to look after younger pupils and the care they take was evident during a school visit to a mosque. In this way, and through class duties, pupils have a variety of opportunities to take responsibility, though many expressed regret that the school council had fallen into abeyance. They are conscious that others both at home and overseas may be less fortunate than themselves and have taken great pride in raising money for charity, both local and worldwide, and keeping their own bar chart, to compare the amounts raised. Many value the small size of the school and the family atmosphere that results. A distinguishing feature is the way in which all pupils, irrespective of gender and culture, relate to each other and to adults in the school community. The school is a highly social community, in which most participate in activities such as the orchestra, choir and sports teams.
- 4.4 A distinctive strength of the school is pupils' relish for the cultural and ethnic diversity present among the pupils and their families. They write copiously and with pride about their own cultures and take an interest in those of others. That breadth is further extended through the diversity of musical and other art forms that pupils encounter, as in the African songs being prepared for a school assembly.

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

- 4.5 The quality of pastoral care is good. The school's arrangements for safeguarding were unsatisfactory overall at the initial visit, but the deficiencies in relation to recruitment checks and aspects of health and safety have been rectified.
- 4.6 The staff provide dedicated support and guidance to the pupils, both personally and academically, because they know them very well and give them all the time they need. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves are excellent and highly valued by both pupils and their parents. The pupils are appreciative of this positive rapport, as are their parents. The school has good links with secondary schools and a good understanding of their requirements and suitability for different pupils, so that it is able effectively to guide pupils and their parents in their choice of future school.

- 4.7 The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are effective, relying on mutual respect, so that sanctions are mild and rarely necessary. The recording of behaviour management concerns is thorough. Bullying, according to most pupils, is rare and effectively dealt with when it does occur.
- 4.8 The school's policies for safeguarding and safer recruitment follow the overall policy of the proprietor and of the local safeguarding board. Staff have up-to-date training in child protection and are aware of requirements. The managing director has inter-agency training. The new designated safeguarding person was signed up to inter-agency training but had not yet received it at the time of the final visit. Poor record-keeping and issues in communication between the proprietor's office and the school led to serious defects in recruitment procedures. The deficiencies had been fully tightened by the time of the final visit.
- 4.9 In most but not all respects the school and its staff take great care for the health and safety of its pupils. Risk assessments and control measures are in place for activities within and outside the school and necessary equipment checks are made and recorded. The proprietor provides a routine cycle of staff training and updating. However, at the initial visit, parts of the fire log had not been attended to. Since that time the headmistress has received fire marshal training and the school fully complies. Suitable arrangements are in place for first-aid, including training for all staff and paediatric first-aid for staff in the EYFS.
- 4.10 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with disabilities, an improvement since the inspection of 2004. Admissions and attendance registers were properly maintained by the final visit, though at the initial visit some teachers had not been accurately recording the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence. The school gives pupils every encouragement to eat and live healthily through guidance to parents on the contents of packed lunches. The promotion of health plays a prominent and effective part in PSHE and science.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is uneven but overall is satisfactory. The proprietor, Happy Child Limited, through the managing director and finance director, has set in place, since their appointment in 2007, a suitable structure for ensuring that the finances and staffing of the school are maintained and a framework of policies and meetings to underpin the education and care provided. They have respected the autonomy of the school and upheld its aims and ethos.
- 5.2 Despite the lack of an independent governing body, the proprietor's organisation is well ordered and has access to a wide range of expertise, through both its own officers and outside consultants, one of whom has been attached to the school to support the headmistress through the transitional period. Regular contact is made with the school, although the company seems remote to both staff and parents. Overall, the managing director has supported the new headmistress and has a good understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of the school.
- 5.3 The proprietor has set an appropriate framework of policy and training to ensure compliance, as reflected in the minutes of meetings, which show a clear programme of training for staff in health and safety and other matters. However, in the period leading to the initial visit of the inspection, it became clear that the proprietor had overlooked important weaknesses in its own and the school's systems for compliance and health and safety. These have now been put right and procedures for checking the school's compliance tightened.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, with areas of both strength and weakness. The change of headship allowed limited time for the new headmistress to become established before the inspection. Despite this, the school has continued to fulfil its aims and maintain its quality in areas such as relationships among pupils, staff and parents, and has made improvements, for example, in balance in the curriculum and in the results in the national tests in Year 6, especially in science. However, a number of underlying weaknesses, particularly in relation to curricular planning and co-ordination, remain.
- 5.5 The school has little formal structure, but internal communication about academic and welfare matters is made effective by a small, united staff, supportive of the new headmistress and devoted to their pupils. Co-ordination of subjects is still a weakness, with only limited monitoring and review in place and appraisal of staff only beginning to be introduced. Already there is evidence of improvement in systems and policy, but it is too early from them to have taken full effect.
- 5.6 Despite the lack of formal systems for monitoring, the school demonstrated a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses in the pre-inspection self-evaluation, and had identified much of what is recommended in this report. However, the development plan was put together quickly last term and mechanisms for orderly review are not yet established.
- 5.7 The systems for appointing staff and for setting role descriptions and requirements are underdeveloped. Moreover, among the requirements not complied with at the

initial visit were those for safer recruitment. The centralised register of appointments maintained at the proprietor's headquarters had been incomplete and inadequately supported by evidence of all the checks conducted. Despite the new headmistress's attempts to remedy the situation, the register remained inadequate at the initial visit. Examples, including recent examples, were found of staff appointed without references or medical checks, or where the evidence for these or for the exploration of past employment details was lacking. Some staff had been allowed to start work without either completed Criminal Records Bureau or List 99 checks. The school took immediate action to remedy these weaknesses. The headmistress has passed the online course on safer recruitment, has properly completed the centralised register of appointments and has either obtained the necessary evidence for any past checks or carried them out anew. All the required checks and the centralised register are now in place.

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

- 5.8 The school maintains good and constructive links with parents, carers and guardians, as it did in 2004. Only six parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, but were overwhelmingly positive in their comments, as were the parents to whom inspectors spoke during the inspection. They regard it as a family school, readily accessible to parents, which provides good pastoral and academic support to their children. Those to whom inspectors spoke were particularly enthusiastic about the support provided for their children's learning needs, and for those with English as a second language. Some concerns were raised about what a few saw as lack of information during changes over the previous nine months.
- 5.9 The school has an active parents' association, Friends of St Christopher's, which has been effective in laying on a variety of social events, such as a Christmas bazaar, summer fete and dinner dance to engage parents. It has raised money both for charity and for resources for the school, such as digital cameras and sports equipment. Many parents take part in visits and other activities of the school, such as school trips. Parents do not at present play any part in discussing the school's future planning.
- 5.10 The parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with full and detailed information about the school and receive clear and useful reports about their children's personal development and progress. The level of detail varies between subjects: all make clear the content and skills covered; some, particularly those for English, mathematics and science, give clear evaluation of progress and suggest targets for improvement; others comment mainly of participation and enjoyment. The school has proper arrangements for dealing with concerns and complaints and handles any concerns with due care.

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 provision in meeting the needs of the children is good and fulfils its aims well. A high adult-to-child ratio ensures that children's individual needs are well met, and staff promote an environment in which the welfare of the children is of great importance, although in the past some aspects of the safe recruitment procedures have not always been fulfilled. The school is fully aware of this and the new management has already taken steps to address this for the future. Detailed records of observations and assessments comprehensively underpin and inform staff knowledge of each child ensuring that no child is disadvantaged. Children make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points and capabilities. EYFS staff have a very clear understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses, and have improved provision since the last inspection with the introduction of new procedures for reporting to parents, including more wheeled toys and providing more opportunities for creative development. Supportive and close relationships between the school, parents, and the local authority and other agencies ensure the best outcomes for the children.

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

6.2 The effectiveness of the leadership and management in the EYFS is satisfactory. A satisfactory range of policies and practices are in place to ensure the safe and efficient management of the department. All staff are suitably qualified and the adult-to-child ratios are high. Risk assessments are secure and procedures are in place for dealing with children who are unwell. Recent child protection training for all staff has been undertaken and the headmistress is booked on to multi-agency training later this term as well as undertaking online safer recruitment training. Resourcing is good and staff make the best use of the facilities on offer to them. Local authority training opportunities are used effectively, and regular and perceptive self-evaluation of the setting by EYFS staff ensures that there is a clear vision for future development.

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

6.3 The quality of provision in the EYFS is good. The Early Years environment supports children's learning and development well, resulting in good progress and development of a lively and positive attitude to their learning. Planning, supported by excellent observation and assessment, is thorough across the six areas of learning for all abilities, but the outside area provides limited opportunities for creative and imaginative play. Sessions include a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Opportunities for purposeful play and exploration are evident, as for example in a session where the children used a range of resources to investigate clocks and time. Warm and positive relationships, detailed home link books, opportunities for parents to share the children's Learning Journeys, and informal discussion between staff and parents ensure that carers are kept well informed. The physical development of the children is supported well through twice weekly physical education sessions, trips to the park and regular movement

sessions. The children's awareness of health and safety and well-being issues is good, and staff model good practice at all times.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children in the EYFS are good. Children are able to organise their own activities well, are confident in making choices and can sustain interest for a considerable length of time. Children progress extremely well in their communication, problem-solving and numeracy, and use the computer with enjoyment in the classroom and computer suite; however, resourcing for progress in ICT is limited. Children's good personal development, positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning are carefully guided by the staff. They show that they feel safe by moving confidently from one area of the school to another, demonstrating respect for their own safety. Children from diverse backgrounds and cultures play well together, and children take turns, care for their possessions and understand the need for personal hygiene. Their knowledge of healthy eating is well developed. They respond well to the expectations of adults and develop secure foundations for future learning.

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 proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Tony Hubbard

Miss Susan Woodward

Mr Gareth Williams

Mrs Diane Gardiner

Reporting Inspector

Junior Team Inspector (Head, ISA)

Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS)

Early Years Lead Inspector