



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WIDFORD LODGE SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Widford Lodge School

Full Name of School	<b>Widford Lodge School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>881/6005</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY309279</b>		
Address	<b>Widford Lodge School Widford Road Chelmsford Essex CM2 9AN</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01245 352 581</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01245 281 329</b>		
Email Address	<b>admin@widfordlodge.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Simon Trowell</b>		
Chair of Proprietors	<b>Mrs Louise Gear</b>		
Age Range	<b>2½ to 11</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>232</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (130 boys; 102 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	2-4 (EYFS):	32	5-11: 171
	4-5 (EYFS):	29	11-18: 0
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Julie Eggleton</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection date/EYFS	<b>11 May 2010 to 12 May 2010</b>		
Final (team) visit	<b>14 Jun 2010 to 16 Jun 2010</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 October 2003.

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 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 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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommended action	4
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The quality of governance	9
(b) The quality of leadership and management	9
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>11</b>
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>13</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Widford Lodge was founded as a day and boarding school for boys in 1935. It became a day school towards the end of the 1980s and has taken girls from 1995. The school buildings consist mainly of a large Victorian villa situated in about five acres of woodland on the outskirts of Chelmsford. It also owns a nine-acre playing field a short distance away. The school is still owned by the founding family, who also form the board of directors; one member of the family acts as chair of proprietors, bursar and registrar. Since the previous inspection, a programme of refurbishment has been carried out.
- 1.2 Pupils are drawn from the Chelmsford area. Their parents represent a diverse mixture of occupations, including the self-employed, those employed in the City and company directors. Entry is non-selective and pupils are mainly white British, reflecting the surrounding population. The range of pupils' abilities is above the national average. Twenty-four pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and receive support in school. No pupil has a statement of special educational need (SEN). Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) but are fluent in English and need no support. At the time of the inspection, the school had 232 pupils, of whom 130 were boys and 102 girls. Of these, 32 part-time pupils and 29 full-time pupils were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for pupils aged two-and-a-half to five. The school is divided into the pre-prep, which includes pupils up to Year 2 and the prep, which includes pupils in Years 3 to 6. In the pre-prep, pupils aged two-and-a-half to four are in the pre-school nursery, and those aged four to five in the kindergarten.
- 1.3 Widford Lodge aims to educate its pupils through a broad and balanced curriculum so that they can meet the challenges of the wider world. It places an emphasis on providing a purposeful, safe and secure environment in which honesty, courtesy and respect of self and others are key. Almost all pupils continue their education in local maintained or independent schools.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

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

School	NC name
Acorns	Nursery
Oaks	Nursery
Kindergarten	Reception

### ***Pre-prep/Prep***

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 1
Form 2	Year 2
Form 3	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4
Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

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

- 2.1 Pupils make excellent progress and gain excellent standards in national tests and in work in school, enabling them to achieve considerable success in entry to senior schools. They have an excellent grasp of basic skills and demonstrate considerable imagination and attention to detail. They work enthusiastically, both as individuals and with others, asking good questions and thinking for themselves. The curriculum provides an excellent balance between preparation for senior school and maintaining breadth. Pupils achieve high standards in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, with exceptional performance in sport. Their rapid progress is underpinned by excellent teaching, in which teachers convey their enthusiasm for their subjects through well-planned lessons delivered with brisk pace and a careful focus on pupils' differing needs. Marking provides detailed feedback but does not always show pupils how to improve their work. The requirements of EYFS are met well in the nursery but have not been implemented fully in Reception.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They grow into confident, thoughtful and supportive individuals who take their responsibilities seriously and who exercise leadership well. They think of the needs of others, for example raising money for charity and helping in a school for pupils with learning difficulties. In turn, staff provide excellent support and guidance, making pupils feel valued as individuals; pupils say there is always someone to whom they can talk. Standards of behaviour are high and pupils say that unpleasantness is extremely rare. Good attention is given to the pupils' welfare. In their questionnaire responses, pupils were entirely positive about all the questions asked, saying how much they enjoy being at the school.
- 2.3 The proprietors provide good oversight and support in almost all areas, and are fully committed to the school's aims and ethos. The roles of the headmaster and the chair of the proprietors, who also acts as bursar, are clearer than at the previous inspection, though responsibility for financial and strategic development is not yet fully shared between them. Excellent leadership of both curriculum and pastoral care in depth supports the high quality education that the pupils receive, addressing weaknesses in curricular leadership identified in the previous inspection. The school is well staffed and almost all the required appointment checks are carried out properly; the few checks outstanding at the time of the initial visit had been completed by the time of the main visit. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, there were no concerns raised by significant numbers of parents. Parents appreciate the open access they have to the school, and are highly supportive of it. Parents are well informed about their children's progress, though reports do not always show pupils how to improve.

## 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 all staff who need them have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks [Regulation 4. (2) (b) and 4C. (2) (d), under Suitability of staff and proprietors and, for the same reason, Regulation 3. (2) (b) under Welfare, health and safety];
  - ensure that the chair of proprietors has an enhanced CRB check countersigned by the Secretary of State [Regulation 4B. (2) (a), under Suitability of staff and proprietors and, for the same reason, Regulation 3. (2) (b) under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified both of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.
- 2.6 In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- within the final term of the EYFS, provide the parent of a child in relation to whom the EYFS Profile has been completed with a written summary reporting the child's progress against the early learning goals and the assessment scales; where the parent requests it, a copy of the EYFS Profile; and details of the arrangements under which the EYFS Profile and its results may be discussed between the practitioner and the parent, giving a reasonable opportunity for the parent to discuss the EYFS profile and its results with the practitioner.
- 2.7 In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- see Regulation 4.(2)(b), 4C.(2)(d) and 3.(2)(b) above.
- 2.8 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those who provide the registered provision for children under three were required to:
- see Regulation 4. (2) (b), 4C. (2) (d) and 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**

- 2.9 In addition to rectifying the weaknesses in meeting regulatory requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Share fully the responsibility for financial and strategic planning between the headmaster and proprietors.
  2. Ensure that both day-to-day marking and reporting to parents always show pupils how they may improve their work.
  3. Implement fully the principles and commitments of the EYFS framework into the Reception year curriculum.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 Standards are excellent and the pupils make excellent progress. Pupils achieve excellent results in National Curriculum tests at age 11, compared with the national average for maintained primary schools; results in English are much improved since the previous inspection. Many pupils are successful in gaining entry to local grammar and independent senior schools, with significant numbers winning academic, music or sports scholarships. Pupils' progress results from the support and challenge they receive from their teachers. Several parents commented how pleased they are with the progress made by their children in the short period of time since joining the school. Pupils have excellent knowledge, understanding and skills, for example producing work in English which is both highly creative and meticulously presented. They show a well-developed imagination and use sophisticated vocabulary, based on careful reading of a wide range of texts. Pupils have a mature understanding of mathematical concepts such as interest. In science, they can apply their knowledge of food webs and habitats to unfamiliar situations, such as how tourists affect breeding populations of penguins. They use their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in a range of situations and make deductions from evidence, for example when looking at Tudor portraits.
- 3.2 In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic, work well together and are highly articulate and confident in discussion. They ask good questions and respond well to challenging questions asked by their teachers. They are prepared to think for themselves, try out their own ideas and, in science, understand how to devise a fair test. They share ideas when working in groups and appreciate the contributions of others. When given a research task, they engage in it quickly, whether using the library or the internet.
- 3.3 Out of class, the school achieves excellent results in matches, even beating a much larger school at cricket during the inspection. Many pupils play at representative level. The string orchestra plays with good intonation and tone, and pupils achieve considerable success in both music and speech and drama examinations.

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

- 3.4 The quality of the curriculum is outstanding overall. Widford Lodge maintains an excellent balance between preparing pupils thoroughly for transfer examinations to senior schools and providing a broad and balanced education covering all the required areas of learning, both in and out of the classroom, as is its aim. The wide variety of approaches to learning reflects heads of departments' enthusiasm for identifying the most stimulating materials and teachers' commitment to using them. For example, the variety of literature read in English and the way it underpins all aspects of learning reflects an open and imaginative approach to the subject. Work in class is complemented by a wide range of trips, visits and visitors where the strong practical focus helps bring learning to life. Information and communication technology is well used to support learning across the curriculum, and special occasions such as the Year 6 activity week extend pupils' experience further. The pupils' education is further enhanced through a variety of links with the local community; for example, Year 6 pupils sing regularly in the local church and

cathedral. Their personal development is supported by a developing programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE).

- 3.5 Work is well planned to meet individuals' needs. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils for whom work is more difficult, or who have LDD; several parents wrote of the superb support their children had received. Masterclasses organised across the curriculum provide additional challenge for pupils who have special ability or interest in a subject. Gifted and talented pupils receive additional high-quality support in small groups to develop their thinking and analytical skills further.
- 3.6 Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities with which they are provided; for instance: 'there are always new activities to do'. These range from wildlife to French in the pre-prep, and from chamber choir to gardening and cricket in the prep. Many pupils take lessons on musical instruments, or in speech and drama. Whilst first teams are chosen on merit, the school fields additional teams to enable others to participate wherever possible. There is thus a wide range of opportunities to represent the school in sport, as well as to perform in music or drama.

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

- 3.7 Excellent teaching underpins all that pupils achieve as they pass through the school. They benefit from teaching which is closely targeted to their individual needs, well planned, delivered at a brisk pace and based on first-class subject knowledge. Teachers engage pupils fully and enthuse them in the matter in hand, whilst supporting those who find the work hard. First-class relationships and a positive approach to learning underpin good classroom management. Learning is constantly reinforced and pupils are encouraged to think and question for themselves. Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to engage in both independent and collaborative work.
- 3.8 A particular feature of teaching is the excellent provision for pupils of varying abilities and needs. Skilful questioning challenges the most able and gives additional practice to those who find work hard. Questioning is well used to check the pupils' understanding. Pupils say the work is rarely too easy and that they enjoy the challenging questions that teachers pose. Extra lessons for gifted and talented pupils provide good opportunity for further development of thinking skills. Much teaching shows a real passion for the subject. Only occasionally does teaching lack pace.
- 3.9 Pupils say how helpful they find marking, much of which is of high quality and gives detailed feedback; however it does not always show pupils how to improve their work or follow up points made previously. The school makes good use of information from assessment to monitor the progress of individual pupils against national norms.

## **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. They are confident, friendly and polite and speak enthusiastically about their school, highlighting positive experiences in all areas of its life. They show care and concern for each other and celebrate the achievements of their peers. Pupils say there is always something to do which makes you feel proud if you are representing the school. The strong family feeling, to which pupils, staff and parents allude, is immediately evident. The attitudes and outlook of all pupils reflect the school's aim to prepare them to meet the challenges of the wider world.
- 4.2 Good spiritual development is enhanced by regular assemblies at which pupils have opportunities to read and say prayers, as well as by services in the local church and Chelmsford Cathedral. Appreciation of the seasons is enhanced through the time spent on nature studies in the school grounds. Pupils have a strong sense of identity and self-worth which is encouraged through work in personal, social and health education, through opportunities to have roles of responsibility, and through the clearly defined and understood systems of praise and rewards.
- 4.3 The pupils' excellent moral awareness is at the heart of the life of the school. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. They also appreciate their wider moral responsibilities. Pupils think of others as well as themselves. Year 6 pupils spent a day working and playing alongside children with LDD as part of their Activity Week. Pupils take responsibility for raising money for their chosen charities by organising events through their house system.
- 4.4 Social development is excellent. Pupils demonstrate a very clear appreciation of their role within the school and the wider community. Effective leadership skills are shown by the responsibility which Year 6 students have for their house, sports teams and younger pupils. Everyone is a good friend, and pupils of all ages clearly support each other well, valuing the varied strengths and qualities within the peer group. Older pupils take a mature responsibility for the younger pupils, both through the structure of friendship groups and the house system, and less formally in the playground and around the school.
- 4.5 The school council provides further opportunities for pupils to explore issues within the school and also the wider world. Two pupils from each class meet under the guidance of the head of PSHE to discuss a range of issues important to them. An unpopular school lunch has been removed from the menu and a cover has been provided by the swimming pool to protect belongings. Pupils understood, however, that a water slide was an unrealistic request and that there were health and safety issues surrounding the installation of hairdryers in the girls' cloakroom. The recent focus on Eco Schools has led to 'Travelling Tuesday' with pupils, staff and parents being encouraged to walk, ride or share car journeys to school, to engage in recycling initiatives and to acquire an increasing awareness of wildlife provision and healthy lifestyles. Pupils have a sound understanding of public institutions and services.
- 4.6 The school provides excellent cultural experiences for pupils through a well balanced curriculum and through a variety of special events such as European Language Day and Africa Day. Advantage is being taken of the current World Cup to help pupils become better informed about the participating countries. Music within

the school gives pupils the opportunity to explore the arts and all Year 6 pupils take part in the school play each year. The high quality art work displayed around the school reflects pupils' studies of the work of a range of artists including Van Gogh, Patrick Heron and John Brunsden.

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

- 4.7 The welfare, health and safety arrangements are outstanding. Staff provide excellent support and guidance for all pupils, who say they are confident there is always someone in the school to whom they can turn. They find the school to be a purposeful, safe and secure environment, as is its aim. Pupils are valued as individuals and for their contribution to the school and wider community. Staff and pupils enjoy relaxed but mutually respectful relationships which underpin the school's family atmosphere. Form teachers support their pupils, but all staff recognise they have corporate responsibility for all pupils in their care. Both prep and pre-prep staff meetings have 'pupil matters' as a regular agenda item. By Year 6, pupils have been made aware of internet dangers in preparation for their moves to the 'wider world'.
- 4.8 The school promotes good behaviour through the clear guidelines in the behaviour policy and through school rules. Pupils show a mature attitude to behaviour. They know that a high standard is expected, and they are clear about sanctions should they be necessary. They say that behaviour is good in the school and could not recall any incident of bullying. Nevertheless, the school's anti-bullying policy is clear and all pupils know what to do if a pupil is unkind; they say that staff are very approachable.
- 4.9 The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for dealing with any child protection issues, and staff have received appropriate training. However, one or two checks relating to staff appointments were not completed at the time of the initial visit, though they have been completed since. Health and safety arrangements are properly overseen by the proprietor and headmaster, and risk assessments drawn up with the assistance of an external consultant. The school has taken appropriate action to guard against the risk of fire. It provides well for pupils who are ill and has drawn up a plan to improve access for pupils with disabilities. It keeps appropriate records of admissions and attendance.
- 4.10 Healthy eating is encouraged by the provision of nutritious lunches which usually include salad and fruit in addition to a hot meal. Lunches are almost universally popular with the pupils, who eat well and understand the need for a balanced diet. They are also aware that they need to exercise in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Excellent warm-up routines were observed in the early morning tennis coaching.

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

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

- 5.1 The proprietors provide good oversight and support to the school in almost all areas. They have supported the school over a considerable period of time and are fully committed to its aims and ethos, financially, practically and personally; for example, recent investment has enabled more effective use of 'outside' classrooms. The chair gives effective support to the school on a day-to-day basis in the role of bursar. However, although the roles of headmaster and the chair have been partly clarified since the previous inspection, they do not share the responsibility for the school's financial and strategic direction fully, leading to some doubt amongst both parents and staff about the school's financial leadership. The proprietors receive full reports on educational and welfare issues, which they discuss in some detail, though other opportunities to gain insight into the day-to-day educational life of the school are more limited.
- 5.2 The proprietors take a close interest in child protection, welfare and health and safety matters. However, a small number of issues relating to checking staff suitability had been overlooked at the time of the initial visit, although these had been carried out by the time of the main visit.

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

- 5.3 Leadership and management are good overall, providing an education of high quality which contributes much to pupils' personal development and academic achievement. Leadership of the curriculum and of pastoral care are both excellent, but there have some shortcomings in meeting regulatory requirements, both in the main school and in EYFS.
- 5.4 All aspects of the school are underpinned by the shared vision of a strong family community in which both staff and pupils give their all to the school, and where strong links exist between pupils in different years as well as within peer groups. Throughout the school, staff feel that they are listened to and that they can contribute, both to the evaluation of progress and to the setting of objectives in the school development plan; as a result, the school has a clear overall ethos and direction. The senior management team works well together under the headmaster's leadership, and heads of department provide innovative and well-focused leadership to their subjects. Through the termly monitoring of teaching and learning, coupled with regular meetings for those teaching their subject, heads of department give strong leadership to the curriculum. However, some aspects of EYFS had not been introduced into Reception at the time of the EYFS inspection.
- 5.5 Staff appreciate the support they receive through appraisal and opportunities for professional development. They support each other effectively through peer mentoring and review, and less formally through offering help with concerts, plays and general school events. Favourable staffing ensures that all pupils are well supported whatever their needs. Staff have received appropriate training in child protection and health and safety. Staff are hard working and committed to the school and its ideals. In almost all respects, appropriate care is taken over all aspects of staff recruitment but, at the time of the initial visit, a small number of

checks had been overlooked, though these had been carried out by the time of the main visit.

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

- 5.6 Relationships between the school and its parents, carers and guardians are excellent, reflecting the overwhelmingly positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and the well developed links that have been established. The school enjoys friendly, co-operative and supportive relationships with parents, in line with its intention to provide a family atmosphere. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were particularly supportive of teaching and extra-curricular opportunities, and pleased with high standards of behaviour and the worthwhile attitudes and views promoted by the school. There were no areas of concern identified by significant numbers of parents.
- 5.7 Parents are well informed about, and well involved in, the life and work of the school. The open-door policy ensures that parents are welcomed into the school at arrival and collection times. Parents support the work of the school in a variety of ways. They transport children to matches and help with outings. Parents with specific skills are used to enhance the curriculum: for example a nursing sister offered first aid training to Year 6 pupils. Parents attend class assemblies as well as sporting events, concerts and plays. The group, 'Friends of Widford Lodge,' supports school events such as the summer fayre and helps to raise money for both the school and a range of charities.
- 5.8 Useful information evenings are held in relevant year groups at the beginning of the school year and helpful curriculum booklets appear on the school's website. During the course of the inspection, new pupils and their parents were made very welcome by staff and members of the parents committee for an induction day. The headmaster's weekly newsletter 'From the Study', highlights pupils' individual achievements and ensures that parents are kept up to date with day-to-day news. The weekly menu is also included.
- 5.9 Parents are also well informed about their children's progress. They receive two reports annually, one of which gives detailed information in each subject area. The other provides a summarised overview of their child's progress. Where relevant, reports contain examination grades and year group averages. However, they do not usually include targets for pupils to focus on to further improve the quality of their work. Parents' meetings are held twice a year to enable parents to discuss progress and welfare with relevant staff.
- 5.10 Minor issues which parents raise are dealt with immediately by teachers or the headmaster. Parents requiring more time are seen as soon as possible by the appropriate member of staff. Parents feel they are listened to and their concerns are addressed. The school's appropriate procedure for formal complaints has been rarely used.

**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 is good. The setting provides a warm, caring environment in which children are happy. Children make good progress in their learning, demonstrate outstanding personal development and exemplary behaviour, and benefit from excellent relationships with staff. The school's aim of educating children of all abilities in a purposeful, safe and secure environment is well met. Since the previous inspection, there have been clear improvements to the overall provision. Staff are reflective practitioners, fully committed to providing the very best start for the children in their care. The process of monitoring and evaluating the provision to inform improvement is at an early stage of development.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good overall. Enthusiastic and hardworking staff are focused on helping all children to make good progress in their learning and development, and on promoting their welfare. Resources, including teaching assistants are well deployed. Relationships between staff and parents are strong. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the parents expressed great appreciation of their children's good progress and of the nurturing, care and support their children receive. Policies, procedures and practice are detailed and effective, and risk assessments are well devised. The setting is developing links with external agencies, including the local authority. Managers understand the importance of identifying clear priorities for continuous improvement, and demonstrate ambitious vision for the setting. However, the monitoring of the setting through regular quality checks is at an early stage, and the school's plans for the development of EYFS are insufficiently clear. At the time of the inspection a few of the required checks for safeguarding children had not been carried out fully; however, the school took immediate action to rectify this omission.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is good. All staff have a clear understanding of the needs of young children. A wide range of activities is provided, with an appropriate balance between adult-directed learning and activities chosen by the children. They are encouraged to be creative and to develop independence. A generous adult to child ratio ensures that children receive lots of individual attention which supports their good progress. Excellent relationships between staff and children are a strength and ensure that children gain in confidence and respond well to high expectations. They learn to share, take turns and form happy friendships. Reception year staff are still developing their knowledge and understanding of the EYFS framework and some of the required elements of the framework are not fully embedded. Planning in the nursery is good. It is based on individual learning needs and identifies clearly the next steps in each child's learning journey. Planning in Reception classes is subject based and does not always match activities closely to children's individual needs; thus opportunities are sometimes lost to move learning forward. Parents are made to feel most welcome when they visit, and they receive

regular and informative reports on their children's progress. At the time of the inspection parents of children in the Reception classes were not provided with the required written summary of their children's progress against the EYFS assessment scales and the school took immediate action to rectify this omission.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are good. Most children make good progress towards, or achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Their personal development is outstanding and they display high levels of confidence, independence, curiosity and concentration. They listen carefully to adult guidance, taking turns and sharing toys and equipment sensibly. Relationships are excellent, and older children say that they feel safe and are confident to share concerns with any member of staff. Children demonstrate well-developed self-help skills, for example knowing why they must wash their hands before eating and why healthy foods are good for them. They develop positive attitudes to learning and make good progress, which is rapid in areas in which the school has a strong focus, such as speaking and listening, phonological awareness, ICT, problem solving and calculation skills. Children respond well to praise and encouragement and are happy in the setting, deriving pleasure from their learning.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

- 6.5 Since the previous inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

**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 proprietors, 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

Mr Ian Newton	Reporting Inspector
Mr Warren Hilton	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Morgan	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Felicity Lawson	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Amanda Emery	Early Years Team Inspector (Head of EYFS, IAPS school)