



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LEADEN HALL SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Leaden Hall School

Full Name of School	Leaden Hall School		
DfE Number	865/6011		
Registered Charity Number	309489		
Address	Leaden Hall School 70 The Close Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 2EP		
Telephone Number	01722 334 700		
Fax Number	01722 410 575		
Email Address	admin@leaden-hall.com		
Headmistress	Mrs Julia Eager		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Sara Willan		
Age Range	2 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	157		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	1	5-11: 134
	3-5 (EYFS):	22	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	135	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 10
Number of Boarders	Total:	22	
	Full:	22	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Jenny Mansell		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection dates	12 Oct 2010 to 13 Oct 2010		
	8 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 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 September 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 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

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

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2009 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Leaden Hall School, founded at Fareham in 1937, moved to its present site in the close of Salisbury Cathedral in 1948. The school became a charitable trust in 1959 and is now administered by a board of governors. It welcomes girls of all denominations, offering day education from the age of three to eleven and boarding education from the age of seven to eleven. There is the option for day boys, usually siblings of pupils in the school, to attend the Nursery.
- 1.2 Aims included in the school's mission statement are to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning, within a stimulating and supportive environment and to develop the self-esteem and self-confidence of the girls through the fostering of independence, tolerance and adaptability. The whole school community is expressly included in the statement's intention to provide good opportunities for personal and professional growth. The school believes strongly that children learn most effectively when they are happy and motivated. The headmistress has been in post since the beginning of 2010.
- 1.3 Currently the school has 157 pupils. Twenty-three pupils, of whom seven are part-time, are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Years 1 and 2 have 38 pupils and Years 3 to 6 have 96 pupils. Twenty-two girls are full-time boarders and there are five flexi-boarders. No pupils have statements of special educational needs, but ten pupils are on the school special educational needs register and receive support. Support for pupils who require help with their English skills is available.
- 1.4 Pupils in the school come from a wide range of backgrounds, including from professional and business families, as well as the armed forces. Parents are regarded as partners in the all-round education of the girls. Most pupils are local to Salisbury, though a number travel from further afield.
- 1.5 Overall, the ability profile of pupils is above the national average. Entry to the EYFS is non-selective and operates on a first-come first-served basis. Entry into other age groups is dependent upon availability and whether the school feels that it can provide the best environment to meet the needs of the pupil. All prospective pupils are invited to spend a day at the school before they are offered a place. Flexible, last-minute all-inclusive care includes breakfast and supper, and the option of flexi-boarding on individual days or at weekends.
- 1.6 Pupils leave Year 6 for a wide range of independent day and boarding schools, or transfer to the local selective maintained grammar school via competitive entrance examinations. Each year a small number join maintained secondary schools.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards, pupils attain high standards in their learning and achievement. From Year 1 onwards, a balanced, structured and stimulating curriculum provides access and opportunities, whether in or outside the classroom however the school's current information and communications technology (ICT) restricts pupils' ability to explore a broader range of new skills. Most teaching is excellent, has high expectations and stimulates and encourages many aspects of pupils' intellectual, physical and creative development. The recently introduced assessment and record-keeping procedures have begun to make a positive contribution to effective teaching and have enabled greater accuracy in the tracking of pupils' progress through the school. Talents both inside and outside lessons are encouraged and nurtured through the extensive activities programme. The behaviour of pupils is of a consistently high standard. A relaxed and respectful relationship between pupils and staff allows them to share the pleasures of learning and high expectations. Good learning habits are encouraged and pupils understand the need to take responsibility for their own development.
- 2.2 The quality of the pastoral care, the welfare of pupils and the attention given to safeguarding is excellent. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Measures and procedures to promote health and safety are of high quality and comprehensive. Co-operation and courtesy are evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils are willing to express their own views and respect the views of others. They work successfully together either in pairs or in groups. Pupils stand for election to the school council. They consider the needs of people in other countries and those less fortunate. Charity events continue throughout the year and closely involve pupils, parents and staff. Boarding promotes pupils' personal development extremely well. Relationships are relaxed and friendly, a good range of activities is available and accommodation is warm and homely.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. Governors are actively involved in the school and use their considerable expertise to give support to the school community. They have been rigorous in ensuring that the recruiting procedures and all regulatory requirements, including those relating to procedures for dealing with child protection and safer recruitment, are fully met. Leadership and management are excellent. Senior managers work well together. They have a clear vision for the school and recent policy reviews are robust. Heads of department oversee the development of their subject areas and support staff in their teaching roles. In turn, members of the senior leadership team (SLT) oversee and monitor the work of each department. Induction and mentoring of staff new to the school is informal and effective. A new appraisal system for teaching and non teaching staff has being introduced. The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents. The pre-inspection questionnaire completed by parents and pupils was overwhelmingly positive.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school's provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and no action was required.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Update and develop facilities further to improve the ICT experience for all pupils.
 2. Continue to develop and embed current assessment procedures to improve monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school.
 3. Continue to develop the outdoor areas in EYFS to improve provision for large-scale construction and role play.

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 quality of pupils' achievements is good overall, and in many instances excellent, relative to their abilities and in line with the school's aim to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning for all pupils. The pupils have a high level of understanding and well-developed skills across a broad range of subjects which they study. They successfully apply their knowledge and think and act critically, and creatively respond to high expectations. The preparation of pupils for the next stage of their education is excellent and is built on the foundations laid by the daily realisation of the school's aims. They are successful in public examinations, and over the last two years all pupils have achieved their first choice schools, many gaining awards.
- 3.2 Mathematical and numerical skills are continually extended and pupils have the understanding to apply them effectively in other subjects, such as science and geography. They can apply mathematical concepts, are articulate and listen well. They are able to reason and develop solutions for themselves. Pupils are well grounded in literacy with an emphasis on reading, comprehension and spelling. Examples within lessons of pupils engaging in independent learning were frequent. Skills and attitudes for work and study are well developed; pupils are focused, able to sustain concentration and enthusiastic in their learning. They show understanding, ask searching questions, give considered answers, extract meaning from material, analyse and reason well. Excellent examples of the sensitive and thoughtful evaluation of each others' work were heard during lessons by pupils across the age range. These skills are well developed particularly in science, religious education, English and personal, social and health education (PSHE), where pupils are willing to risk an opinion and happy to share ideas. Art work displayed around the school invites discussion amongst pupils and they expressed their enjoyment of creating an original piece of art.
- 3.3 Pupils' ICT skills are developing and their use in cross-curricular activities is increasingly integrated into the wider curriculum, particularly in areas of research, presentation of graphs and writing skills. However, the school's current ICT provision restricts pupils' ability to explore a broader range of skills.
- 3.4 Pupils who require help with their learning are well supported in class. Comprehensive individual education plans (IEPs) which are reviewed regularly, are in place. In addition to one-to-one teaching, good use is made of learning support assistants in lessons. Guidance is given to teachers by the head of learning support to help ensure pupils make rapid progress both in lessons and over periods of time. Gifted and talented pupils enjoy excellent opportunities for investigative work in many areas of the curriculum.
- 3.5 Pupils persevere well in tasks set and are eager to achieve high levels of success. A striking feature is the pupils' enjoyment of their lessons; in interviews they showed great interest and enthusiasm in talking about their subjects and activities. The presentation of work is of a high quality.

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

- 3.6 In accordance with its aims, the school has a balanced and stimulating curriculum, and this is a strength of the school. It is well planned, with an appropriate amount of time devoted to each of the required areas of learning. It is suited to all ages, needs and abilities, and supports the school's aim that pupils should strive to achieve their academic potential, discovering and developing individual talents and interest within a nurturing pastoral care framework that is secure yet challenging.
- 3.7 Planning throughout the school is supported by detailed policy documents and ensures continuity of education and progression across the years. The recently introduced assessment and record-keeping procedures have begun to make a positive contribution to effective teaching and the ability to track pupils' progress through the school more accurately. Data collected is beginning to influence planning and the evaluation of pupils' performance. Teachers have started to use assessment data more effectively.
- 3.8 The needs of pupils requiring help with their learning are met well, and the school carefully monitors their progress. IEPs are of a high quality. Gifted and talented pupils enjoy many opportunities for investigative work, which extends across the school and across many subjects. Year 5 and 6 pupils are set according to ability for maths, science and English and modern foreign languages. Creative subjects are well represented through design and technology, art, drama and music.
- 3.9 The school encourages and nurtures pupils' talents outside lessons and through individual and group activities in all the creative arts, a wide range of sporting opportunities and academic pursuits achieving high levels of success locally and nationally. Achievements include winning the Salisbury Schools Swimming Gala and success in local music festivals for the school's Chamber Choir.
- 3.10 The school makes excellent use of its outdoor space for learning and play. Timetabled games lessons take place on the fields alongside the school, in the school hall and in the playground areas. The physical education and games curriculum enables pupils to participate in a range of physical activities and to enjoy them.
- 3.11 The range of extra-curricular activities offered is varied; it includes creative, sporting and academic opportunities for pupils and is suitable for their ages. The pupils expressed appreciation for the opportunities offered them to develop their interests and hobbies. Frequent trips and excursions are organised for all age groups, including museum and theatre outings locally, and further afield places of historical and artistic interest which further broaden their aesthetic development. Visitors to the school include authors, story-tellers and representatives of the emergency services.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 Teaching is excellent across the school. It enables pupils to learn and understand effectively. Teachers know their pupils extremely well; are committed to them and provide high-quality support which is in keeping with the school's aim to encourage pupils to make the most of their intellectual potential. Pupils work well independently, reflect thoughtfully and contribute openly, and confidently, when developing and exchanging ideas.
- 3.13 Lessons fully meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Appropriate tasks are set for the more able pupils, and those pupils requiring help with their learning are well supported. All pupils acquire new knowledge, make rapid progress, increase their understanding and develop new skills.
- 3.14 Teaching at all stages demonstrates considerable subject expertise, knowledge and understanding. The outstanding level of support provided by adults promotes effective progress and encourages good learning. Careful attention is given to ensuring that effective methods are used to support learning. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect to build confidence and foster enjoyment. Lessons stimulate and encourage many aspects of pupils' intellectual, physical and creative development, and pupils have good opportunities to engage in scientific inquiry. The pace is appropriate and time managed well. Pupils are always willing to add to class learning when invited to discuss or to offer their own views and ideas.
- 3.15 Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly both formally and informally. New systems for assessing the pupils' progress throughout the school to track pupils' progress more accurately are not yet fully established, though planning is beginning to take account of data gathered. Marking is of a good quality. Meaningful comments written by some teachers as a dialogue between teacher and pupil, which may be continued orally in class, offer additional help and encouragement.
- 3.16 Teachers use resources effectively to promote interesting learning. Interactive whiteboards, which are increasingly available throughout the school, are used to good effect and are an additional resource which enhances both teaching and learning. Classroom behaviour is exemplary.

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, meeting the school's aims of building confidence and self-esteem in its pupils, and encouraging consideration for others. Supported by outstanding pastoral care, this is a major strength of the school.
- 4.2 Pupils are confident and articulate, and have a sense of pride in their own and others' achievements. Acknowledgement and celebration of success are part of the school's life, through which the pupils develop self-confidence and self-belief. They learn to value and respect themselves and others.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of pupils is nurtured most successfully in the creative arts, assemblies and in lessons. Regular assemblies where the orchestra plays, the choir sings or individual pupils perform provide the opportunity for pupils and staff to come together, offering time for celebration of school and individual success and collective worship. Time for quiet reflection helps pupils to value their contribution to the well-being of their school. Pupils appreciate and show a growing respect for their environment and the natural beauty of their surroundings.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral awareness is excellent. Pupils have a strong moral code, which permeates the daily life of the school. They are able to distinguish right from wrong at an early age. From the start of the EYFS, pupils learn to share and are taught about appropriate boundaries for social behaviour. Relationships at all levels are strong; in particular, pupils resolve issues between themselves without the need to refer to an adult. They have a strong sense of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Pupils understand the system of expectations and rewards which they consider to be fair.
- 4.5 Social development is outstanding, and shows self-discipline, self-knowledge and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy friendly and respectful relationships with staff and know they are well cared for. They are always willing to help each other.
- 4.6 Pupils rise to the challenge when given responsibilities as school prefects, class monitors, school counsellors or eco-monitors, and these enhance their personal development. Pupils are aware of the wider community and recently raised a considerable sum of money for charities, both local and further afield.
- 4.7 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. Pupils have a strong understanding of major world cultures. For example, gifted and talented pupils organised a whole-school, two day, 'International Festival', thus enabling all pupils to share such an experience. In the Year 6 'Rainbow Week', pupils take part in workshops including activities in art, textiles, music and computer animations, culminating in preparing and serving dinner to their parents. Pupils understand the significance of the major festivals and traditions of a variety of faiths and cultures.
- 4.8 The school enjoys excellent links with the local community. Pupils visit residents of a local retirement home, and the outside community use the school facilities for a variety of activities. The annual carol service is held in the cathedral. Through the 'Comenius project', pupils travel to countries within the EU to share in different cultures and to debate ecological matters which affect the world in which they live.

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

- 4.9 The quality of the pastoral care and the attention given to welfare is excellent, and measures to safeguard and promote the health, safety and welfare of the pupils are of a high quality. The caring environment is a major strength of the whole school and one in which the pupils feel valued and where independence is fostered. Pupils' response to others is exemplary. They are willing to express their own views and respect the views of others. Staff are supported in the day-to-day pastoral care of their pupils by well-planned structures. Parents are extremely happy with the care, help and guidance given to their children.
- 4.10 Co-operation and courtesy are evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils recognise and understand that they are accountable for their own actions; they work successfully together. Teachers are at the heart of the pastoral system. Regular staff meetings include discussions on pupils' welfare, and information about pupils is shared in order to support individual pupils if necessary. The medical care available to pupils who are unwell or injured is excellent. Accident records are kept correctly, and many staff are trained first-aiders. The school has effective measures in place to promote good behaviour, which are understood by all pupils. Pupils of all ages move around the school purposefully and happily, and settle quickly into lessons. The anti-bullying procedures are highly effective, and include the development of awareness of cyber-bullying through PSHE and ICT lessons. Pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were unanimous in praising the school for the high-quality care and support it offers them. They are very happy in their school.
- 4.11 All staff take opportunities to promote pupils' welfare through praise and encouragement. As a result of the excellent arrangements the school has put in place, pupils are confident that they can ask an adult for support if they have a problem.
- 4.12 Through the school curriculum, and with the support of the school nurse, pupils are taught the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise. The school provides a choice of balanced and nutritious dishes at lunch. Pupils spoke about the measures the school takes to keep them safe on school visits.
- 4.13 The safeguarding of pupils is good; all staff are trained. Measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards; regular fire drills are held and staff receive fire training. Health and safety procedures are effective, with risk assessments covering all aspects of school life. Electrical testing is appropriately carried out and health and safety documentation is thorough. Risk assessments are undertaken in all areas of the school and those for the health and safety of pupils on school trips are comprehensive and detailed. An accessibility plan is in place, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.14 The quality of the boarding experience is excellent and fully supports the aims of the school. Such high quality has been maintained since the Ofsted inspection in November 2009. Boarding accommodation is provided in two buildings. The main school house has four dormitories on the second floor for girls up to and including Year 5. A separate building, a short walk from the main school, houses the Year 6 boarders, giving the older girls some level of independence. New boarders are made welcome with an informative handbook, in languages other than English if necessary, and a personal boarding buddy. The buddy has an agreement honouring their role of looking after a boarder. The school offers occasional boarding alongside the well-established full boarding and has two weekend exeats per term.
- 4.15 Relationships within boarding, both between pupils and adults and amongst pupils themselves, are excellent and positively support pupils towards developing their independence whilst offering a consistent and highly effective level of care; this is much appreciated by the boarders and their parents. A number of day pupils take up the opportunity for flexi-boarding. The head of boarding and her deputy greatly contribute to the pupils' well being by creating a warm family atmosphere.
- 4.16 The pupils relish their boarding experience, enjoying the social aspects and the many opportunities for hobbies and play. Activities in the evenings and at the weekends are well organised and give pupils a wide range of experience.
- 4.17 Boarders have ready access to a telephone and they write a letter to their parents each week. Boarders who are unwell or need medication are treated by the sister or school matron, with good support from the local surgery if necessary. Comprehensive records are kept. Pupils have a designated listener who is a staff member, and they also have access to an independent listener if they so wish.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. Governors take a full part in the overall strategic planning and financial management of the school and support its aims. They are actively involved in the school and use their considerable expertise to give support to the school community. The board of governors meets regularly. Properly minuted meetings ensure that governors are informed. The chairman meets regularly with the headmistress. Through carefully constituted committees, they have been rigorous in ensuring that the recruiting procedures and all regulatory requirements are fully met. As members of curriculum planning groups they advance their understanding of the school's educational needs. Governors have an understanding of, and successfully take an active part in, the day-to-day running of the school. A number of governors are regular visitors to the classroom, where they observe lessons; one has special responsibility for the EYFS. Governors have ensured that the school's accommodation is suitable and well maintained, and that resources are appropriate. Staff have regular opportunities for professional dialogue with governors.
- 5.2 The governors, many of whom are parents of former pupils, show a strong allegiance to the school and, in particular, the friendly community spirit and the well-rounded, articulate young people it develops. They are happy to support as many school events as is practicable. The headmistress receives good support from the governing body.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management across the school is excellent. Leadership and management fulfil the school's aim to provide a thorough and appropriate academic education, enabling most pupils to achieve their potential. Heads of department oversee the development of their subject areas and support staff in their teaching roles. In turn, members of the senior leadership team (SLT) monitor the work of each department.
- 5.4 Through the SLT, the school is led with vision and a commitment to achieve the best possible standards in academic pursuits, pastoral care and the personal development of pupils. Its members work well together and involve staff in discussions which lead to overall ownership of decisions reached. The SLT meets regularly each week to discuss matters of current importance in routine management and to plan for future developments in the school. Minutes are kept and decisions taken are effectively implemented across the school. A clear educational direction for the school is emerging. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well through recent initiatives and policy reviews. Systems and policies are in place to ensure continuity and consistency across departments and year groups, particularly to ensure a smooth transition between years. Additionally, communication and the sharing of information amongst staff happens easily and informally.
- 5.5 Teaching, non-teaching and support staff are effectively deployed, and all staff share in the vision which ensures that the school's aims are fulfilled successfully; they work with commitment to achieve the best possible standards in pastoral care and

personal development of pupils. The administrative, catering, maintenance staff and all other support staff display commitment, dedication and loyalty to the school. Together they provide high-quality service, upon which the smooth running of the school depends. Communication within the school is highly effective. Management at all levels values the contribution of teaching and non-teaching staff.

- 5.6 All policies, including safeguarding and safer recruitment, are in place, up-to-date and implemented thoroughly. The issue of assessment is being addressed. Governors and staff are properly appointed and the central staff register is fully completed. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained, in accordance with requirements. The school's development plan is comprehensive; it is based on the evaluation of current provision, is the result of wide consultation and includes timescales, costing and success criteria.
- 5.7 Induction procedures for staff new to the school are effective. Teachers new to the school much appreciate the support they have received through their induction. A framework for the appraisal of teaching and non-teaching staff has been recently introduced.

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

- 5.8 The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents and strong links with the community, which make valuable contributions to the pupils' learning and personal development. This maintains the high standard seen at the time of the previous inspection.
- 5.9 Communication with parents is strong. Provision of information to parents is helpful and informative and includes a parents' handbook. Full written reports are provided in the spring and summer terms, though reports do not always provide guidance as to how pupils might improve their work. Formal parents' evenings are held twice a year for each year group with additional curriculum evenings for specific year groups at other times. The school handles the concerns of parents carefully and sensitively. Close communication between home and school and an open door policy ensure that most difficulties are resolved informally and speedily. A formal complaints procedure is in place. No formal complaints have been received during the past academic year.
- 5.10 An active and successful parents' association organises social and fundraising activities. Recent contributions include the well-equipped EYFS play area and a new minibus.
- 5.11 The responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire completed by parents indicate that they are very satisfied with the school. They were particularly pleased with the teaching, their children's progress and achievement, the range of subjects taught, the attitudes and values the school promotes and the standard of behaviour. Parents and pupils are pleased with the quality of education and care provided by the school. The inspectors find these views fully justified. A small minority of parents expressed some concern about the lack of information about the school. The inspectors judge that the school offers good opportunities for parents to obtain the information required.
- 5.12 Parents of prospective pupils receive detailed information about the school, together with a colourful and helpful prospectus. Parents are kept fully informed about pupils'

achievements, events and news through the pupils' homework diaries, regular information letters, update letters and a weekly newsletter. The school website has an open area on which all officially required information, including policies and procedures, is posted and is available to parents.

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 This is an outstanding setting with a strong capacity to sustain improvement. A thorough process of self-review ensures the achievement of the school's aims of providing a stimulating, caring and safe, environment in which children can develop individually, whilst enjoying sharing their learning and experiencing life with their peers. It also ensures that the setting provides experiences that broaden and extend the skills, talents and values of each member of the school community. Staff recognise the unique qualities of each child and show an excellent understanding of how to meet their individual needs. The high expectations of the staff and excellent knowledge of the development of young children facilitates the significant progress made by children with differing abilities and needs. The strong mutual respect and the level of care demonstrated by staff and pupils are strengths of the setting.

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

6.2 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for safeguarding children and all staff are suitably trained. Using contributions from staff, parents, governors and children, clear direction for developments within the EYFS is set, with a strong focus on well-being for all and on achievement and learning. The head of the setting has an excellent understanding of the provision's strengths and a clear vision about how the development of the EYFS is integral to the overall development of the school. All records, policies and procedures necessary for the efficient management of the setting are in place and well implemented. Risk assessments are detailed, carefully organised and reviewed regularly. A programme of training for all EYFS staff is being developed. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the parents expressed a strong appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of their care. Every opportunity is taken to inform parents of their children's progress and links with external agencies are well developed.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. All children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and first-hand experiences that are specifically aimed at pupils' individual needs. There is a clear focus on what the children are going to learn, and a considered balance is maintained between adult-led and self-initiated activities which involve choosing, exploring and discovering. The school recognises the need to refine this balance for each cohort. The children's welfare is strongly promoted, so that their individual needs are well met and all benefit from a full range of learning experiences. Planning is detailed and used extremely well across all areas of learning. Children have access to a wide range of high quality resources which they use effectively. The outdoor environment gives them experiences of weather, seasons and the natural world. In addition, it encourages them to be creative and to develop their independence. Key persons guide and support children well and provide safe and clear routines for them. The children enjoy the

healthy snacks provided for them and the sociable nature of snack time and lunchtime.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children in the EYFS are outstanding. The children achieve very well and are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. Children learn to communicate fluently, enjoy books and express their thoughts and feelings with developing confidence. They embrace new experiences and skills positively. They are very confident in working with computer programmes and number, and display high levels of independence and problem-solving ability. Children develop good physical co-ordination through a varied programme of opportunities to dance, swim and experience physical education and games; however, the outside areas do not provide sufficient opportunities for physical development. The children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. They are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated, relating extremely well to one another and to adults. Children demonstrate the school's culture of mutual respect and co-operation extremely well. Behaviour, which is exemplary, is effectively managed through a culture of positive praise. Children develop a particularly good awareness of personal safety and they comply with the school's simple rules.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.6 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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 Frank Skipwith

Mrs Niki Gan

Mrs Diane Gardiner

Reporting Inspector

Head, IAPS school

Early Years Lead Inspector