



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

STOKE COLLEGE

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Stoke College

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|---------------------------|---|
| Full Name of College | Stoke College |
| DfE Number | 935/6003 |
| Registered Charity Number | 310487 |
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| Email Address | office@stokecollege.co.uk |
| Head | Mr Matthew Parker |
| Chair of Governors | Mrs Gwen Caddock |
| Age Range | 4 to 16 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 140 |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (86 boys; 54 girls) |
| Numbers by Age | 0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 48 3-5 (EYFS): 20 11-16: 72 |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: 127 Capacity for flexi-boarding: 9 |
| Number of Boarders | Total: 13 Full: 0 Weekly: 13 |
| Head of EYFS Setting | Mrs Carla Dale |
| EYFS Gender | Mixed |
| Inspection dates | 04 Oct 2011 to 05 Oct 2011 02 Nov 2011 to 04 Nov 2011 |

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 2007.

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.

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- 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 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 Stoke College is a charitable trust benefiting from a governing body who are mainly from professional backgrounds and directors of a limited company. The school is non-denominational and embraces traditional values such as service and charity within a caring community. The school seeks to enable pupils to achieve their potential whilst developing tolerance and the understanding of differences. Emphasis is placed on aiming to ensure that pupils develop a positive self-image and skills for achieving in a fast changing world in which they will be ready to contribute to their communities. The governors have oversight of the school. The head, responsible for the daily running of the school, is supported in achieving the school's aims by a senior management team.
- 1.2 Set in spacious grounds overlooking the river Stour, Stoke College traces its roots to 1415 and the foundation of a Priests' College. It offers education to boys and girls from three to sixteen years. Entry is not through academic testing but by interview to determine if the aspiring pupil is likely to benefit from joining the school. The boarding house provides for weekly and day boarders and supervised homework after school.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has focused development planning on the 'six next steps' for improvement in the education of pupils in Reception to Year 6. These plans, which include a restructured curriculum, more rigorous assessment and a higher level of collegial working, have been accompanied by a significant change in junior school staffing. The development of resources has included a refurbished library, new computers and an upgraded information and communication technology (ICT) suite.
- 1.4 Of the 140 pupils on roll, 54 are girls and 86 boys, 13 of whom are weekly boarders. The Nursery provides for 20 pupils in the EYFS and the preparatory department for 48 pupils.
- 1.5 The ability profile of pupils is in line with the national average although a wide range of ability levels exist throughout the school. The school does not enter pupils for national tests at age seven or eleven. There are few pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.6 Fifty-one pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and five pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).
- 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 The overall academic and extra-curricular achievement of pupils is excellent. Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress in relation to their abilities which is supported by a broad and balanced curriculum and a varied programme of extra-curricular activities. Teaching is good overall with examples of excellence. The pupils demonstrate good study skills. The pupils' excellent attitudes and willingness to work together and with their teachers contribute to their achievements in academic and other activities. A review of assessment techniques has been introduced to ensure greater consistency and clear target setting which helps pupils to improve.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is outstanding and supported by the high standard of pastoral care provided by specially trained staff. Pupils develop excellent social skills; they are well mannered and respectful of others. Their cultural awareness develops well through links with charities and schools in less affluent parts of the world. Through their willingness to take posts of responsibility, pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Excellent welfare arrangements ensure the pupils' safety and physical well-being both within school and on trips and visits.
- 2.3 The governing body is extremely effective in supporting the aims of the school. School policies are regularly reviewed and the majority of recommendations made in the previous inspection report have been successfully met. Leadership is strong and supported by a restructured senior management team. New appointments and training have led to more rigorous monitoring and resulted in an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the pre-preparatory and preparatory departments. There remains a need to strengthen links between Nursery and Year 1 to ensure a smoother transition for all children. Good links are established with parents. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of education, the worthwhile attitudes and views which the school promotes and the quality of information they receive. The comprehensive complaints policy is available on request.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Continue to standardise assessment procedures and planning across the junior and senior schools to ensure smooth transition.
 2. Develop the outdoor area in the EYFS for the youngest pupils to use independently.

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 overall achievement of all pupils, including those with SEND, in academic studies and extra-curricular activities, is excellent. The school successfully meets its aim to ensure that all pupils are well educated and acquire the necessary skills for the next stage in their education.
- 3.2 In most lessons the interest of pupils is quickly gained and their determination to succeed is supported. In the senior school, sound knowledge and well-developed study skills are used to understand new material. The ability to work and to learn independently is demonstrated in research for project work but insufficient opportunities to use these skills occur in many lessons. Senior school pupils used good numeracy skills to calculate the estimated energy release from nuclear fission. Pupils are logical in their approach to problem solving and devising fair tests in practical subjects. Work displayed around the school, showed good creative skills. Older preparatory school pupils considered the power of subliminal selling in advertising and developed their use of vocabulary in creative writing. Younger pupils used good powers of logic when investigating the use of fractions.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, achievement in extra-curricular activities is very good and pupils are successful in gaining awards and certificates in a variety of activities including sports, drama festivals and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. They participate enthusiastically, develop their ability to work together and support each others efforts. Senior school pupils in particular show initiative and good powers of organisation when planning their own contributions. Pupils successfully gain distinction in academic subjects including scholarships and awards in mathematics, music and sports and drama festivals.
- 3.4 The pupils attain standards which are in line with the school's aim to enable pupils to attain the highest level of which they are capable. The school does not enter pupils for national tests at ages seven or eleven, therefore the pupils' attainment cannot be judged in relation to a fixed national norm but on the evidence available from written work and performance in lessons, this is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils successfully gain entry to the secondary school of their choice, many with the award of exhibitions and scholarships. The following analysis uses the data for the years 2008 to 2010, the last three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools. Two-thirds of pupils gained 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including mathematics and English. A quarter of these were A* or A grades. In 2011, examination rates improved, with over three-quarters of the pupils achieving grades A* to C. This attainment, as judged in the junior school indicates that pupils make good, and sometimes high progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. All leavers successfully gain places in their first choice of institution for the completion of their education. Three-quarters study A Level and the rest follow vocational courses. The high proportion of pupils with SEND make strong progress. The school's monitoring of their progress indicates that their levels of reading and comprehension are significantly improved.
- 3.5 The pupils' attitude towards their work is excellent, they show a real desire to learn. When faced with challenges, they put in an extra effort. In all sections of the school, they are articulate and listen attentively to their teachers and each other.

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

- 3.6 A broad curriculum, supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, makes a good contribution to the achievement, learning and skills of the pupils. The school meets its aim to stimulate their curiosity and develop a desire to achieve their best. They are well prepared to take on future challenges.
- 3.7 The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well represented. Creative and expressive arts meet the school's aim to enable pupils to become effective communicators with a positive self-image. The inclusion of business studies and single sciences for the most able since the previous inspection has widened the range of GCSE options. The school is seeking to improve opportunities for all pupils to learn a modern foreign language. A particular feature is the inclusion of regular 'enrichment days'. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is timetabled and includes attendance at open days and work experience week for senior school pupils. Responding to recommendations made in the previous inspection, the school identified 'six next steps' to address weaknesses in the preparatory department. A complete revision of the curriculum with a focus on independent learning, reduction in the use of worksheets and new reading schemes along with a rigorous monitoring system and staff changes have resulted in an improvement in the quality of learning and levels of achievement. Recently junior school pupils worked in mixed age groups to study the history and culture of New Zealand. A steering group meets regularly to consider further changes to the curriculum and monitors the impact of any changes.
- 3.8 The school is making progress in its aim to meet all the pupils' learning needs. An excellent quality learning support department provides for pupils with a wide range of SEND. Pupils with particular educational needs are given individual education plans and supported by the deployment of well-qualified staff in the classroom.
- 3.9 The extra-curricular activities programme is extensive and includes clubs for sports, artistic performance and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme amongst many. The range of opportunities offered in the extra-curricular activities programme was acknowledged by both pupils and parents in pre-inspection questionnaires. Pupils were excited by the 'Life Spaces' club in which they explored theology and philosophy through the medium of games. In line with the school's aim, participation in these activities enables pupils to develop self-confidence and the willingness to take on responsibilities.
- 3.10 A wide range of quality links with local and international communities contribute effectively to the pupils' cultural and personal development. Enthusiastic participation in many charitable events, including Christmas gifts for children in Romania, military charities and links with a school in Kenya, further their understanding of different cultures and the challenges faced by others in their lives. Senior citizens are welcomed into the school for coffee mornings and the school holds a weekly prayer group meeting for the local community.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching.

- 3.11 Teaching is good overall and some is excellent, supporting the school's aim to engender a strong desire to learn in its pupils. Recommendations from the previous inspection have largely been met. Development planning has placed an emphasis on using a range of effective teaching methods which include strategies to ensure that pupils of all abilities have an equal opportunity to participate in activities and discussions. A cycle of lesson observations by senior managers monitors consistency and peer observations spread good practice. An over-dependence on photocopied worksheets has been replaced by the planning of more varied activities to meet the needs of all abilities. In some subjects routine target setting for pupils helps them to understand how well they are learning and how to improve. Input from the pupils in the review of targets is effective in stimulating the interest they take in their own attainment and progress. The school has yet to fully achieve its aim to provide more opportunities for independent learning; these are not included in lesson planning by all subjects.
- 3.12 The most successful lessons introduce pupils to the pleasure of learning, stimulate their curiosity and encourage them to use their imagination. In most lessons, learning objectives and links with previous learning are made clear. Overall delivery and pace is pitched to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities with appropriate sequencing of activities and use of time to evaluate what has been achieved, but when this is not consistently done progress is slowed. When used appropriately, teaching resources, which are good in all classrooms and include an upgraded ICT suite, further the pupils' understanding. The extended provision of the library and recent acquisition of new computers for research and project work by pupils have promoted a more independent approach to learning. When given the opportunity, pupils are keen to work on their own and to follow their interests and extend their knowledge.
- 3.13 Assessment procedures, adopted since the previous inspection, are thorough and stress a focus on how pupils learn as well as what they have learned. Marking is generally good and the best includes assessment objectives and clear marking criteria. Records are kept for both effort and achievement grades. The regular gathering of evidence by departments identifies any pupils who are under-performing across a number of subjects. Consequent meetings outline action to be taken and ensure the future tracking of their progress. Outcomes of assessing children in the EYFS are not currently used to ensure a smooth transition for them to the next stage in their education. This slows the progress made in Year 1. At GCSE, teachers use predicted grades to monitor the pupils' progress in preparing them for examinations. Self- and peer-assessment by pupils is encouraged in some subjects with the result that they take more responsibility for their own learning. Teachers spend time with each pupil to discuss their progress. Pupils express appreciation of the help they are given to improve.

4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 In line with the school's aim, pupils of all ages, show outstanding personal qualities. They are well mannered, respectful of others and tolerant of difference. The school successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The result is apparent in their excellent behaviour and social skills. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, pupils expressed an overwhelming satisfaction with the help they receive and opportunities to take responsibility for activities in school and in the local community.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The traditional Christian values embraced by the school are coupled with an emphasis on understanding and respecting the beliefs of others. A number of visiting speakers are warmly received and pupils come to appreciate the importance of a religious faith in all its forms. Pupils have ready access to the natural environment and appreciate a place for quiet contemplation. Their spiritual development is seen in the displays of work produced in the creative arts. In assemblies, sometimes presented by pupils, they appreciate the value of coming together as a school community and through prayer give thanks for what they have. Initiating schemes for supporting charities is seen by pupils as a way of caring for those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They distinguish between right and wrong both within their own community and in the world at large. Year 11 pupils discussed the ethical issues relating to the use of nuclear fission and were able to determine when its use is appropriate. In tutorial time Year 5 pupils were made aware of the right of everyone to express their own opinions and to be heard. Pupils respect the school's rules, made clear in a very comprehensive behaviour policy, and fully understand what is expected of them.
- 4.4 The social development of all pupils, including the very youngest, is excellent. They mix socially with each other very well. They are welcoming and keen to put visitors at their ease. In the senior school, older pupils act as mentors for younger year groups who share with them any difficulties they may be having with work or relationships. Mentors resolve these through conversation and seeking advice. Form representatives serve on the school council which discusses issues affecting the community. Through presentations from outside speakers to all sections of the school, pupils have been introduced to topics such as building self-esteem and how to help someone dealing with grief. Pupils understand wider social issues through activities in international charities and the local community. They enthusiastically take part in events which invite members of the local community into school. Attendance by some pupils at a national internet safety day has alerted pupils to the importance of its sensible use.
- 4.5 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different cultures. Preparatory school pupils study Chinese and come to understand different traditions. Pupils in Year 9 showed good understanding of cultural differences when comparing the marriage vows made in a number of countries. Pupils take genuine interest in hearing about the experiences of visiting speakers representing a number of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. They show tolerance without a hint of discrimination. The school helps them to celebrate differences. This is seen in their writing, art and drama work.

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

- 4.6 Provision for the welfare, health and safety and pastoral care of pupils is excellent. These values are modelled by adult members of the school community who readily reward pupils who display them. The well-being of pupils is seen as the responsibility of all staff, teaching and non-teaching and this enables their excellent personal development.
- 4.7 A restructured tutorial system has ensured that highly-qualified staff with the required skills have oversight of the personal development of pupils. They have instituted pupil contracts to support efforts to raise the achievements of their tutees. The PSHE programme is well thought out and the contents meet the school's aim to promote care and consideration for others. Form tutors know their pupils well and readily give their time to deal with their needs. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are a feature of the community. Pupils say that teachers are fair, show concern for them and listen to their views.
- 4.8 The school's high expectations are outlined in the behaviour policy which is shared with pupils and parents. It deals with conduct in and out of school. Pupils consider the school's 'Step System' for dealing with transgressors to be fair. Good behaviour and consideration for others are positively promoted by the rewards system which celebrates achievement and acts as an incentive for pupils to work towards their goals and to become involved in all school activities. House points are displayed in classrooms, certificates presented in assemblies. These are greatly valued by pupils.
- 4.9 Misdemeanours are rare but an effective procedure is in place for dealing with breaches of the code of conduct. Pupils say that bullying is very rare because they will not tolerate it in their school. All staff are trained in managing difficult situations.
- 4.10 All safeguarding policies are shared with teaching and non-teaching staff who have attended training at the required intervals. Liaison with the local safeguarding agency ensures that any issues concerning the pupils' welfare are readily recognised and action taken. The health and safety committee, chaired by the head, meets regularly and presents its findings to the governing body. Since the previous inspection, risk assessments have been revised. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards and fire drills held each term. Regular reviews seek to improve access for those with physical or learning needs. Provision for medical care is good. Twenty members of staff are qualified in first aid, one at the higher level. Medication is properly stored. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and lifestyles. These are discussed in tutorial sessions. Admission and attendance registers are scrupulously maintained and stored appropriately.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.11 Good provision is made for weekly boarding which contributes well to the personal development and education of the pupils. A friendly, homely atmosphere supports the school's aim to create an environment in which contribution to the wider community is encouraged and celebrated. All recommendations made in the previous Ofsted inspection report have been met. A programme of refurbishment and redecoration has been instigated and resulted in much improvement to the sleeping accommodation.
- 4.12 The boarding experience is a strong factor in helping pupils to discover and develop their talents and to achieve their potential in all areas of school life. Through taking posts of responsibility, boarders develop self-confidence. Their work benefits from a structured and disciplined approach to study. Boarders feel that the code of conduct, displayed around the house, is reasonable and punishments, though rarely needed, are perceived as fair. A reward system reinforces the value put on good behaviour and making a contribution. The accommodation is spacious and can provide for flexi-boarding and homework sessions for day pupils.
- 4.13 Boarders value the friendships they make and the family environment generated within the house. A boarding policy outlines the rules and expectations of boarders and contributes to their overall experience. Boarders consider the support of house staff as an important factor in their enjoyment of school life. In weekly meetings, staff discuss any concerns regarding boarders. Homework is supervised by a member of the house staff. A wide range of activities is available to boarders in the evenings. Many are arranged in response to the boarders' requests; horse riding is a recent addition. Boarders have set up a tuck shop and the profits made are used to fund outings. There are recreation areas and rooms for quiet pursuits. Boarders said that 'there is always something to do'.

5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance provides excellent support for the school's aims and is committed to providing a first-class education for all its pupils. The board exercises scrupulous review of all policies and procedures regarding welfare, health and safety. Accommodation is clean and well-maintained.
- 5.2 The governors' wide range of expertise is effectively deployed in sub-committees which meet termly. Named governors oversee welfare, education and financial management and the quality of provision in the junior school. Risk assessment meetings review all the necessary measures to ensure the safety of pupils within school and on school trips. The governing body is kept in touch with new legislation by named members who have been trained in health and safety matters and child protection.
- 5.3 The finance committee works closely with those who have financial responsibility in the school and oversees sound investment in the extension and maintenance of the accommodation. They provide good support for the development of resources across the curriculum. The recruitment and induction of high-quality staff is a priority.
- 5.4 Regular visits, including some to lessons, inform the governing board of the working of the school. Contact with staff and pupils enables them to monitor the school's implementation of the school development plan. Board meetings have included presentations from each member of the senior management team and each term will include presentations from heads of department. The board includes a representative of the parents' association and is kept informed of the parents' concerns and opinions.
- 5.5 Governors have successfully met the recommendations made in the previous inspection to improve the quality of learning in the pre-preparatory and preparatory departments; staff have been appointed for their strong teaching skills.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.6 The school benefits from excellent leadership overall. This is reflected in the quality of the pupils' achievements and personal qualities. A passion for Stoke College is evident, which inspires the whole community and which has been instrumental in bringing about much improvement since the previous inspection. A strong vision for the future of the school is supported by a senior management team committed to furthering the aims of the school. Throughout the school, all required policies for the delivery of a robust curriculum in a safe and supportive environment are regularly reviewed.
- 5.7 In the junior school, procedures have been introduced to assess the pupils' progress against national benchmarks. Good management in the EYFS has produced a development plan with clear vision and priorities for improvement including the introduction of systems for the smooth transition to the next stage of education.
- 5.8 Regular self-evaluation by senior managers leads to the setting of priorities for improving the quality of education being delivered. These are monitored by

observing lessons and attending department meetings followed by staff training where appropriate. In a continual quest for improving the quality of teaching, individual staff performance is reviewed each year and all are regularly appraised.

- 5.9 The recruitment of skilled staff has been adopted as a strategy for improving the quality of learning. There have been a number of new appointments since the previous inspection which have resulted in a marked improvement in the standards of teaching and learning. All staff are trained to meet pupil needs, their safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. An induction programme for all new appointees has been introduced. Job descriptions for all posts are reviewed every year after consultation with staff.
- 5.10 The school's safe recruitment practices are rigorous and the central register of staff appointments is properly maintained.

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

- 5.11 The quality of links with the parents is good. The leadership team maintains close contact with the parent body. The meet and greet evening at the beginning of the school year and coffee mornings bring all parents together with staff and the opportunity to discuss the school's provision for their children. In their responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of education provided and the progress made by their children.
- 5.12 Parents have access to a wide range of information, including that required to be provided for parents of existing and prospective pupils. Regular publications include a monthly newsletter which highlights the expectations and experiences of school life and the pupils' many achievements. The school's website has been re-designed and email contact with parents has been established. Parental views are sought through surveys.
- 5.13 Two full and two interim reports a year, together with regular consultation evenings, provide parents with detailed insights into how their children are progressing. The text in these reports includes informative comments and grades for the pupils' effort and achievement. Honest assessments and constructive guidance for future development are included. Homework diaries provide another means of contact. Academic targets are recorded and tutors can report a concern or praise work. Tutors check the diaries daily and parents are invited to sign them once a week.
- 5.14 Since the previous inspection the appointment of a member of the senior management team with specific responsibility for communications has significantly enhanced contact with parents. They are welcomed into the school on many occasions to speak to pupils about careers and to support extra-curricular activities. Many parents are enthusiastically involved in the Parent Teacher Association which organises events throughout the year including the annual ball which raises money for investment in the school.
- 5.15 The school's complaints policy is robust and, although it has not needed to be used recently, it outlines appropriate procedures. It is comprehensible and available on request from the school and on the new website successfully launched earlier this year.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the setting in meeting the needs of all children is good in all areas. Relationships between staff and children are outstanding, as is the quality of provision, in most aspects. Policies and procedures to promote the welfare of the children are good with thorough monitoring systems to ensure their continuing safety and well-being. The staff work as an effective team to oversee outcomes and ensure that all children make good progress. Staff are aware of the need to continuously improve and adapt to change. Since the previous inspection the Nursery has moved to premises alongside Reception and the pre-preparatory. There is now a well-resourced outside classroom which is used every day.

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

6.2 Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. All safeguarding procedures are thorough and efficient systems to assess risk for all areas are in place. Whilst the management's clear vision and priorities for improvement are outlined in a comprehensive development plan, it contains no strategy for ensuring a smooth transition to Year 1. High standards are expected in all areas of the children's education and care. Good assessment systems and collegiate working enable outcomes for the children to be reviewed effectively. The setting promotes equality and eliminates discrimination. Dedicated and experienced adults ensure that the needs of every child are met and their progress supported. Opportunities for professional development, through the local authority, are used effectively to improve the quality of provision. The school values the views of parents which are sought through regular questionnaires, in which parents have expressed their appreciation for the education their children receive and of the progress they make. A new initiative seeks to encourage more fathers into the setting.

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

6.3 The provision is outstanding in most aspects. The classrooms are well-resourced with clearly labelled equipment and provide an interesting learning environment. The programme is well planned and provides a good range of educational experiences. Assessment systems are thorough and inform outstanding planning of the next steps needed for each child's progress although communication with Year 1 is not fully developed. The outdoor area includes an adventure playground and a great variety of textures, sounds and experiences although full accessibility for the children's independent use is not fully developed. Children of all abilities are appropriately supported and guided towards independence. The staff provide good role models for the children and promote their welfare.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for all children are excellent and they progress well. Their development of language and use of number is good. The children enjoyed writing their names in different forms and were able to choose the correct tools to measure objects. Children have outstanding relationships with adults and care about each other's feelings. Throughout the setting, children express their thoughts clearly and listen to the opinions of others. They play well together, making sensible choices when using a variety of materials and are able to assess the risks involved in activities. Their creative skills and ability to solve problems are well developed.

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

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Mrs Patricia Cullen | Reporting Inspector |
| Mr Steven Boyes | Director, ISA School |
| Mr Trevor Gray | Assistant Head, IAPS Preparatory School |
| Mrs Alison Edwards | Head of Individual Learning, IAPS School |
| Mr Andrew Hampton | Head, ISA School |
| Mrs Kirsten Jackson | Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector |