



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE RYLEYS SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Ryleys School

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Full Name of School | The Ryleys School | |
| DfE Number | 895/6002 | |
| Registered Charity Number | 525915 | |
| Address | The Ryleys School Ryleys Lane Alderley Edge Cheshire SK9 7UY | |
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| Email Address | ryleysoffice@btconnect.com | |
| Headmaster | Mr Patrick Barrett | |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Timothy Smith | |
| Age Range | 3 to 13 | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 253 | |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed | |
| Numbers by Age | 3-5(EYFS):70 | 5-11:164 |
| | 11-18:19 | |
| Head of EYFS Setting | Mrs Jennifer Palmer | |
| EYFS Gender | Mixed | |
| Inspection dates | 20th to 21st September 2011 and 17th to 19th October 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 November, 2005.

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 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 The Ryleys is a co-educational preparatory school whose mission statement stresses commitment to the traditional values of courtesy and respect for others within a happy, secure and disciplined family environment. The school emphasises the nurture of individual gifts and talents and strives to enable children to accomplish success. The school is a charitable trust with a designated governing body.
- 1.2 Established in 1877 as a day and boarding school for the sons of local families, the school became a charitable trust in 1962 and boarding provision ceased in 2006. In 2009 the school became co-educational when girls entered the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and junior school. In 2010 girls were admitted to the Middle School and to the first year of the Senior School.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection the school roll totalled 253. The EYFS serves children aged from three to five. The Nursery caters for three to four year olds, and the Reception for four to five year olds. The Reception class operates as part of the junior school alongside Years 1 and 2, and the middle school comprises Years 3 and 4, and the senior school Years 5 to 8. Admission follows assessment, interview and discussion with parents. The school is situated in Cheshire on the southern outskirts of Greater Manchester. Pupils are from local professional and business families. A wide range of nationalities, faiths and cultures are represented in the school.
- 1.4 Pupils' ability is above the national average and reflects a wide spread from far below to well above average ability. At eleven and thirteen years pupils gain entrance to senior schools of their choice, obtaining a range of scholarships. Of the fifteen pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), ten receive specialist support. The school has identified twenty-one pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Ten of these pupils receive specialist support. Two pupils have statements of special educational need.
- 1.5 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 |
|-------------|-----------|
| Nursery 1 | Nursery |
| Nursery 2 | Nursery |
| Reception 1 | Reception |
| Reception 2 | Reception |

Junior /Middle/ Senior Schools

| School | NC name |
|---------------|---------|
| Junior school | Year 1 |
| | Year 2 |
| Middle School | Year 3 |
| | Year 4 |
| Senior School | Year 5 |
| | Year 6 |
| | Year 7 |
| | Year 8 |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 In accordance with the aims of the school, pupils from the EYFS to Year 8 are extremely well educated within a happy, stimulating environment and gain entrance to the senior schools of their choice. The excellent curricular provision stimulates pupils' interest. Together with their enthusiasm, keenness to contribute and succeed and exemplary behaviour, it adds significantly to outstanding achievement and effective learning. The high quality of the teaching and excellent relationships between pupils and staff contributes effectively to pupils' good and often rapid progress, especially in creative areas and sport. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated strong support for all aspects of provision, particularly pupils' achievements, the quality of teaching, the family atmosphere and excellent behaviour. These views were supported by inspection findings.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is outstanding. It fully reflects the desire of the school that confident and self-assured pupils are courteous, respectful, sociable and friendly toward others. Pupils are exceptionally happy with and justifiably proud of their school and have a strong sense of justice. The excellent pastoral care of pupils supports and guides them sensitively and places significant emphasis on their welfare and health. The highly efficient implementation of well-organised pastoral systems fosters pupils' academic achievement effectively across the school.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is strong. The governors are highly committed to the school ethos, the care and development of pupils and the standards achieved. They discharge their responsibilities regarding welfare, health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils effectively. The extensive preparation undertaken by governors and senior managers moved the school from boys only to co-educational smoothly and successfully since the previous inspection. The excellent leadership and management by senior managers provide a clear vision for the school. They have high expectations of all and high aspirations for all. They evaluate provision efficiently, identify needs accurately and produce clear development plans. Subject management is good overall. Good, clear documentation and assessment information ensures managers know how pupils are progressing. Senior managers, however, do not ensure that all subject managers monitor teaching and learning. The school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection to include targets in reports to parents. The recommendation that all marking provides targets for improvement has not been met fully.

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) Recommendation(s) for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement(s).
1. Ensure that all subject managers monitor teaching and learning.
 2. Meet the recommendations of the previous inspection fully by ensuring all marking includes targets for pupils.
 3. In the EYFS, implement plans to improve communication with those parents who are not seen on a daily basis.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Pupils are extremely well educated. In accordance with the school's aims, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding effectively within a happy, purposeful environment that nurtures their gifts and talents. Across the school, achievement is excellent overall. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents indicated their appreciation of standards achieved.
- 3.2 At all ages, pupils converse confidently and with assurance, listen well to their teachers and each other, and read fluently with good understanding. Junior pupils use wide-ranging vocabularies in their written work, especially when describing visits. Senior pupils' interesting, well-constructed historical accounts exemplify their proficiency in a range of genres. Pupils' good linguistic skills and fluency are enhanced through visits abroad. Junior School pupils manipulate numbers efficiently and with understanding. Middle School pupils worked confidently with three dimensional shapes, solving increasingly difficult problems. Senior School pupils apply measuring and graphical skills particularly well in geography and science. Pupils enjoy discovering new scientific facts, making sensible deductions and recording their findings accurately. Pupils' excellent achievement in music is reflected in high quality singing, composition and musical appreciation. Pupils' wide ranging artistic skills and techniques are reflected in outstanding artwork and three dimensional modelling. Pupils achieve high standards in a range of sports. Their acquisition and application of information and communication technology (ICT) is good, as illustrated by Junior School pupils when identifying light sources and by Senior School pupils' interactive presentations on the Black Death.
- 3.3 Pupils' outstanding achievement in activities is reflected in the significant number of gold and silver medals gained in a national mathematics challenge, recognition in local and regional art exhibitions and competitions and a variety of speech and drama awards. The number and range of individual and group musical awards are outstanding. Choral and instrumental success has resulted in many public performances, including sharing national concert stages with French choirs. Pupils' high quality sporting skills have resulted in awards at the North of England children's triathlon events and places on the North of England swimming team, national youth football teams, a range of local and regional sports teams and the North of England rugby Barbarians.
- 3.4 The school does not enter pupils for national tests therefore attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average. Pupils' work and their contribution to lessons and the extensive curriculum indicate that attainment is good overall and high in creative subjects and sport in relation to pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils' work and their achievements confirm progress is at least good and often rapid in relation to their ability. Assessment records verify pupils with SEND and EAL attain well and make at least good and often rapid progress over time. This is especially so in literacy and numeracy where pupils make significant gains in reading in a short time due to the excellent support of staff. Pupils in Years 6 and 8 are successful in gaining entrance to senior schools of their choice, many of which are selective, obtaining a variety of scholarships.
- 3.5 Pupils' commitment to success is clear and they are positive, effective learners who present their work neatly. Junior School pupils cooperate well together, contribute

enthusiastically and enjoy success. Middle School pupils concentrate and apply themselves well. Senior School pupils are motivated, collaborate well in groups and work conscientiously on their own. At all ages, pupils maximise the opportunities afforded them to gain independence in managing their work.

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

- 3.6 The curriculum is excellent overall and extra-curricular provision is outstanding. In line with the school's aims, the curriculum successfully prepares pupils for entry to their chosen senior schools and caters for a wide range of talent and ability. The curriculum supports achievement effectively, is suitable for all ages and abilities and contributes well to pupils' progress. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were pleased with the curriculum.
- 3.7 Pupils' literacy studies are significantly enriched with visits to theatrical productions, participation in public speaking events and visits from authors and touring drama companies. Pupils' linguistic expertise is expanded with French from Nursery and Latin and Spanish in Year 7 and 8. Mathematical and scientific knowledge is developed through well-planned programmes and utilised suitably in a range of subjects. The provision of independent learning opportunities within the curriculum varies across the school. An excellent range of scientific, geographical and historical field trips enables pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding practically. The ICT curriculum is planned well to improve pupils' ability to store, record and present their work. Application of these skills across the curriculum is good and constantly developing. Pupils' musical and artistic talents are provided for extensively with excellent, stimulating programmes that engender rapid progress. Their physical development is promoted effectively through an exceptionally wide-ranging sports programme, enhanced by foreign ski-trips and various sports tours at home and abroad. The Senior School curriculum ensures rigorous preparation for senior school examinations. Pupils' excellent personal development is strongly supported through a carefully planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE.)
- 3.8 Good planning and effective communication between each stage of learning promotes continuous progress in the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Excellent planning of whole-school topics engages pupils of all ages and contributes significantly to their personal development. The curriculum takes full account of the move to co-education and ensures equal access and provision for boys and girls. Pupils with EAL benefit from curriculum adaptations that meet their needs. Teachers ensure that new subject language is understood and are quick to support if difficulties with language skills are experienced by pupils. Effective systems ensure that the curriculum for pupils requiring learning support is adapted in accordance with guidance from specialist staff. The programme for more able pupils challenges and extends learning across the curriculum. This is currently being expanded to include after-school extension clubs.
- 3.9 Outstanding extra-curricular provision expands pupils' horizons, increases their knowledge and enriches personal development. Pupils speak enthusiastically of visits to a stately home where they become Victorians for a day. High quality dramatic and musical productions, concerts and literary competitions significantly enhance pupils' knowledge and self-confidence. Their language skills and cultural knowledge are enhanced during foreign visits, links with schools abroad and after-school language classes. In Years 6, 7 and 8, pupils' orienteering and personal

survival skills are developed during their Scottish expedition. The extensive range of academic, sporting and creative clubs is enjoyed by pupils of all ages.

- 3.10 The substantial links with the locality have led to provision of a new artificial pitch, shared with the local hockey club, which benefits school and community alike. Through strong support of local charities, chosen by pupils, plus significant participation in local events, pupils appreciate the needs and work of others in the area. Older pupils enjoy their links with the world community, particularly participation in an international interactive mathematics quiz.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 Teaching is excellent and meets the school's aim to nurture pupils' gifts and talents and promote success. Teachers' high expectations and excellent relationships with pupils engender positive attitudes to learning and behaviour that promote good and rapid progress and support excellent personal development. Teachers prepare older pupils extremely well for their senior school entrance examinations.
- 3.12 Outstanding lessons are planned meticulously. The teachers' extensive subject knowledge, varied approaches and skilled questioning challenges pupils, increases their knowledge and sustains their interest. Their enthusiasm for their subjects inspires pupils. Building well upon previous learning, the teaching stimulates pupils to think, express their views confidently in their own words and become independent learners. The efficient management of time and imaginative use of resources enables pupils to complete their tasks, and enrich their learning. Teachers' high expectations, brisk pace and effective use of praise promote rapid progress, as exemplified in the speed with which pupils grasped new pieces during choir practice and when they created excellent dramatic improvisations of a local legend. Across the school, good, well-planned teaching motivates pupils to learn.
- 3.13 Teachers' knowledge of their pupils, good quality guidance and support enables pupils to progress well and achieve success. The excellent relationships between teachers and pupils ensure exemplary behaviour. The clear discussion of learning objectives ensures pupils understand exactly what is expected of them. Good lessons move at a lesser pace, contain fewer independent activities and some work is not as well adapted for specific learning needs as in excellent lessons.
- 3.14 The use of ICT is growing. The effective use of electronic whiteboards to support and involve pupils in interactive exercises stimulated junior pupils to create quality descriptions of story characters and added a stimulating visual addition to excellent role-play by Middle-School pupils.
- 3.15 Teaching provides well for pupils requiring support with their learning. The additional provision and guidance in individual plans, provided by the learning support department, is excellent. This enables teachers to adapt work according to need and promotes progress. Teaching assistants support individual pupils well, increasing their ability to access learning effectively. The provision of additional challenges and tasks during lessons ensures more able pupils extend their knowledge in line with their ability.
- 3.16 The implementation of a wide range of assessments assists teachers to monitor pupils' progress accurately and regularly. Teachers assess pupils' understanding and progress efficiently during lessons. The information from ongoing and end of year assessments is recorded meticulously, analysed carefully and used well to ensure that pupils are challenged according to their ability and need. The detailed

examination of specialised assessment results by the learning support department leads to effective guidance and support for pupils with specific needs. The results of recently introduced systems to monitor attainment and progress across the school have been analysed meticulously and the information used to plan changes in provision for the benefit of specific pupils and, on occasion, year groups. Across the school the majority of marking offers pupils good advice for improvement. However, on occasion marking congratulates pupils but does not, as recommended at the previous inspection, offer targets for improvement.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Across the school thoughtful, responsible pupils show a keen sense of fair play and, in line with school aims, work and live respectfully alongside each other.
- 4.2 Pupils' strong support for each other's achievement promotes high self-esteem and contributes well to their excellent spiritual development. The confident pupils readily share views and feelings during class discussions. They utilise opportunities for reflection well, as demonstrated in assembly when younger pupils realised that first impressions of friends were not always accurate. Pupils are self-assured, respectful of and sensitive towards the many beliefs represented in the school. They understand and appreciate matters of importance in different religions. Pupils caring and supportive actions towards each other's views are enriched by regular pastoral visits from local clergy and discussion with representatives from other faiths. Pupils' sensitivity to external stimuli is clear in their high-quality responses to a wide range of music and art.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Junior School pupils' clear view of right and wrong, strong sense of fair play and senior pupils' knowledgeable discussion of the part rules and sanctions play in maintaining order demonstrate their well-developed moral code. Pupils express their concern for those less fortunate through extensive support of a wide range of self-chosen charities. Pupils' informed and mature views on conservation were exemplified in their discussions and support of recycling measures and funding of 'Naru', an orphan orang-utan in Borneo until it could be released into the wild. Pupils' growing understanding of good citizenship was evident in their conversation about and interest in local issues, which led to interesting surveys concerning the effect of a new by-pass on the locality. Older pupils significantly expand their knowledge of moral dilemmas affecting them in discussions with local scientists concerning the use of animals in research.
- 4.4 Social development is excellent. Pupils are courteous and polite when greeting their peers, staff, and visitors. Pupils of different ages care for each other well, chat happily during recreation times and have a well-developed social awareness. They engage in purposeful collaboration during lessons and work well as teams to support their houses. They especially enjoy organising all-age social events, and are competent hosts when welcoming pupils from other schools. The heads of houses, prefects and monitors perform their duties extremely well. House prefects offer effective oversight and care for house members at recreation times. Pupils allocated to assist and befriend new pupils as they settle into the school are known as 'supporters'. They perform their roles effectively. School Council members represent the views of their peers eloquently, and enjoy the work they undertake in their roles on the council.
- 4.5 Pupils' strong cultural development and appreciation of cultural diversity is enriched by the range of nationalities represented in the school. The pupils' good understanding of local cultures is enriched by communication with and visits from representatives of religions and cultures in their community. Their extensive general cultural knowledge is significantly expanded through theatre, museum and gallery visits, and through various musical performances. Their thorough knowledge and understanding of world cultures is expanded through a wide range of musical, artistic and geographical studies and experiences. Older pupils' growing knowledge of

European culture is significantly enhanced during residential visits to a range of European countries and strong links with a school in France.

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

- 4.6 Provision for pupils' pastoral care and welfare, health and safety is excellent. In line with the school's aims, staff provide high quality guidance for pupils' academic achievement and their sensitive support for individual pupils promotes excellent personal development. The implementation of pastoral systems is highly effective.
- 4.7 Junior and Middle School pupils are supported sensitively as they work and Senior School pupils receive excellent academic and personal guidance in preparation for their senior school examinations. When responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents particularly commented on their appreciation of the high quality of pastoral care. The excellent relationships between pupils and adults are evident in easy and respectful interactions. The staff are effective role models whom pupils approach confidently if they have a concern. They strongly promote excellent behaviour and courtesy at all times. Form teachers are the first point of contact for pupils and their swift responses ensure daily concerns are dealt with speedily. Provision is recorded suitably, monitored thoroughly on a weekly basis and discussed regularly in staff meetings. Pupils of all ages express the view that they are supported extremely well in their work and personal interactions. Pupils with SEND and those for whom English is an additional language receive high-quality guidance tailored to their individual needs.
- 4.8 The systems to monitor and deal with harassments and bullying are efficient and effective. Pupils of all ages are quite clear about what bullying means, how it affects themselves and others and they understand fully the school's stance on bullying. They are adamant there is very little bullying, and are confident that, should such behaviour occur, staff will deal with matters swiftly and successfully. Clear records demonstrate the high level of care taken by the school to deal effectively with the very few instances of less than acceptable behaviour that occur. The excellent behaviour across the school is supported well by the competent use of the rewards system through which the staff acknowledge and value pupils' contributions in many areas.
- 4.9 Pupils are safeguarded extremely well. The staff attend regular child protection training at levels appropriate to their roles. Policies are implemented well and good relationships exist with local safeguarding boards. Safer recruitment procedures are applied carefully and the central register of staff is maintained correctly. Pupils' health and safety is managed efficiently and matters identified as requiring attention are dealt with swiftly. Measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are implemented correctly. Fire procedures, appliance checks, training, risk assessments and practices are up to date and recorded suitably. Pupils who are ill are cared for well. A significant number of staff are first-aid trained, including paediatric first-aid and medical facilities are well-equipped. The school's accessibility plan and learning support provision ensure facilities for pupils with disabilities of any type are continually monitored and assessed. They detail how the school works to eliminate discrimination of any type. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is reflected in high-quality lunch-time menus and the extensive range of physical activities undertaken by pupils of all ages. In conversation, pupils know what constitutes good health and speak extremely highly of the food provided on site. The admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance of the school is strong. The governors are highly committed to the school, to securing its aims and ethos, promoting success and maintaining high standards. The governors oversee provision effectively and encourage continual growth and development. Their wide-ranging skills are of significant benefit to the school. Specific sub-committees monitor school life, standards and policies competently and report back to the central governing body. Through frequent visits, meetings with and reports from the headmaster and senior managers, governors remain consistently well-informed of the quality of provision. Governors ensure senior staff are appraised annually. Their astute and careful financial management has facilitated provision of a highly qualified staff complement, continual refurbishment of the premises and good resources. Involvement in school development planning informs governors of what is succeeding and what requires further development. They use this information effectively in long-term strategic planning.
- 5.2 The governors discharge their responsibilities in the areas of safeguarding and welfare, health and safety well. Nominated governors have been fully trained in these areas. Sub-committees oversee academic and legislative requirements, ascertain the efficiency of child protection procedures and monitor maintenance of the central register of staff effectively. The governors are aware that pupils' reports now contain targets for improving performance but that not all marking includes targets for improvement, as was recommended at the last inspection. When planning the admission of girls the governors undertook comprehensive research and extensive preparation, in strong cooperation with senior managers. This has resulted in a well-planned, smooth and highly successful transition to co-education since the previous inspection.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Leadership and management of the school are excellent overall. The strong senior management team ensure that the school meets its primary aim that pupils achieve well and gain entry to their first choice of senior school.
- 5.4 The senior managers' high aspirations, clear vision and strong direction promote high standards and excellence throughout all areas of school life. They monitor and evaluate provision and the implementation of policies efficiently. They use their findings to identify priorities for action that are incorporated into a comprehensive development plan that is shared with staff and governors. Regular progress reviews ensure that senior managers know how the plan is advancing and highlight areas requiring further attention. Excellent leadership, planning and preparation by senior managers and governors resulted in a highly successful transition to co-education recently. Subject management is good overall. Subject managers produce good, clear, well-written curriculum documentation and monitor standards and progress well through regular assessment. They have adapted provision successfully for the move to co-education, thus enabling equal access to the curriculum for boys and girls. Senior managers have not ensured that all subject managers monitor teaching and learning, which makes it difficult to identify inconsistencies in provision. This has been identified as an area for improvement in the school plan.

5.5 Throughout the school, competent monitoring by senior managers ensures that pupils are safeguarded well. Attendance at regular training ensures that senior managers are up-to-date with their knowledge and application of legislative requirements. The senior managers acquire and retain a complement of well-qualified, experienced staff whom they deploy effectively, and are conscientious about ensuring that the appropriate checks are undertaken prior to employment. Annual appraisal systems identify teachers' individual needs and highlight areas for development. Senior managers strongly promote and support staff training. Ably assisted by the finance department, they apply budgets effectively and ensure good resources are acquired to support teaching and learning.

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

5.6 The quality of links with parents, cares and guardians is outstanding. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate strong parental approval of all aspects of provision. In particular, parents commented favourably on pupils' achievement, staff availability, extra-curricular provision, pastoral care, the promotion of good behaviour and the quality of teaching. These comments are supported by the findings of the inspection.

5.7 Parents have a significant involvement in school life. Daily interaction with staff enhances effective communication and ensures that concerns are dealt with immediately. Parents' considerable contributions to activities and outings are welcomed by staff. Parents share cultural celebrations with pupils, organising Thanksgiving Day meals, German Saints' feast days and the festivals of Diwali and Eid. The parents' social committee significantly enriches home-school relationships, raises funds for additional equipment, helps with charitable events and organises well attended social events. Every year their 'Biggest Breakfast' raises considerable funding for Cancer Research. The homework diary and email system ensure effective daily communication between home and school. Throughout the term, parents are encouraged to assist pupils with research for their projects.

5.8 The information sent to parents is of high-quality. The colourful weekly newsletters inform parents of school events, and the annual magazine celebrates achievement. Copies of updated school policies, academic results and news appear on the school web-site as well as being available at the school. An informative prospectus states the school's aims, ethos and expectations, and inserts are brought up to date regularly. Comprehensive handbooks for parents and pupils guide recipients through the complexities of school life. Parents receive helpful information at the beginning of each term as to what their children are studying. Middle School parents attend highly informative coffee mornings during which expectations for the year are discussed, questions answered and timetables explained.

5.9 Parents with a concern or query regarding their child may contact the school at any time, as well as attending formal meetings at which they discuss their children's progress with staff. The annual reports to parents are excellent. Almost all contain detailed information of pupils' knowledge, skills, progress and what is required to improve further. Reports also contain good information on pupils' personal development and their contribution to school life. Reports now contain targets for improvement as recommended at the previous inspection. The school has a clear procedure for the reporting of parental concerns and handles these swiftly and with care.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

6.1 This is an outstanding setting, meeting the needs of all children whilst fully appreciating their individual differences. An excellent system of review and self-evaluation ensures the realisation of the school's aims of fostering a love of learning by providing a happy, safe and caring environment in which each child can develop to their full potential. The staff sustain existing high standards through continuous improvement and creation of a stimulating environment where children feel valued and safe. Since the last inspection, the provision of opportunities for child-initiated activities has increased.

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

6.2 The leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. Excellent arrangements ensure that children are safeguarded effectively. All adults have been suitably checked, and are well qualified and appropriately trained. The successful implementation of records, policies and procedures promote equality and eliminate discrimination. The regular, perceptive and detailed self-evaluation of competent managers sustains excellent improvement and clearly identifies priorities for development. As a result the school has identified the need to improve communication systems with parents who are not seen on a daily basis. The proficient implementation of regular risk assessments ensures children's safety. Parents were strongly positive in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They especially mentioned their appreciation of the progress their children make and the standard of their care. The effective use and good management of resources, including those outdoors, leads to highly successful outcomes for all children.

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 valuable first-hand experiences. A well-judged balance exists between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children regularly benefit from both indoor and outdoor play. The excellent identification of individual needs, the efficient use of information gathered from continuous assessments and high-quality individual attention ensure that all children are supported effectively and make rapid progress. The staff develop children's thinking and encourage their curiosity through challenging questioning. Their work and interests are valued and reflected in high-quality, colourful displays. The staff promote welfare, health and safety extremely well and children are encouraged to eat healthy meals. Early intervention by trained support staff promotes the children's infectious enthusiasm for learning from the outset. The behaviour policy is implemented well, resulting in a happy and busy atmosphere, where children benefit fully from all the opportunities provided.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Children make rapid progress towards meeting all the early learning goals, with many likely to exceed them. Reception children identify initial sounds correctly. They use the interactive white board effectively to solve problems such as fitting items into a picnic basket. Nursery children identify numbers on a number chart and carefully count apples on a plate. They converse easily and enjoy looking at books. All children co-operate well, enjoy their learning, make choices and take decisions. Their increase in confidence and self-esteem prepares them for a successful transition to the next stage in learning. Children trust and respect their teachers and relate well to each other and to adults. They feel safe, enjoy their lunches and understand the importance of staying healthy, and of good hygiene. They respond to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment.

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 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 Sandra Gordon

Mr Michael Anderson

Mrs Nicola Woodman

Mrs Lynda Boden

Reporting Inspector

Former Head, IAPS School

Director of Studies, HMC school

Early Years Team Inspector