



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Michael's School

Full Name of School	St Michael's School		
DfE Number	886/6016		
EYFS Number	EY377954		
Registered Charity Number	307924		
Address	St Michael's School St Michael's Drive Otford Sevenoaks Kent TN14 5SA		
Telephone Number	01959 522 137		
Fax Number	01959 522 137		
Email Address	office@stmichaels.kent.sch.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Keith Crombie		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Gordon Owen CBE		
Age Range	2 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	454		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (268 boys; 186 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	40	5-11: 278
	3-5 (EYFS):	79	11-13: 57
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	454	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Mary Stephens		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	01 Feb 2011 to 02 Feb 2011 02 Mar 2011 to 04 Mar 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 February 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.

CONTENTS

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

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St. Michael's was founded in 1872 in Croydon. It moved to its present very spacious site in Otford in 1925 as a boarding school for boys; since 1990 it has been a day school for boys and girls, with a pre-prep department which is located a short distance from the main school buildings. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of trustees and a governing body. Since the last inspection the school has undergone an extensive refurbishment of classrooms, art, design and technology (DT), information and communication technology (ICT) and music facilities.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, 454 pupils were on roll. In the pre-prep, 119 pupils were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and, of these, 80 attended part-time. Additionally 78 pupils were in Years 1 and 2. In the prep there were 257 pupils from Years 3 to 8. Four pupils do not have English as their principal language (EAL), but most are not at an early stage of learning English. Approximately one in twenty pupils are from a non-European background, although nearly all of these have English as their main language. Forty-one pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The school welcomes children from all backgrounds and abilities and no formal selection procedures take place. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Through its academic, social, cultural, moral and spiritual aims, St Michael's school seeks to provide a high standard of all round education. It recognises that every child is an individual and aims to promote their happiness and well-being as members of a caring community. It encourages each child to fulfil his or her potential within all areas of school life. Within a Christian framework it strives to develop self-confidence, a sense of responsibility and consideration for others, as well as tolerance and respect for the diversity of the world.
- 1.3 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 All pupils are highly successful in their learning, and the overall quality of their achievement is outstanding. Extremely high standards of achievement are evident in both academic work and a wide range of other activities. The pupils' outstanding achievement is strongly supported by the high quality, broad and interesting curriculum. An extensive range of opportunities is offered by the excellent extra-curricular programme, in which the majority of pupils participate. Extremely well-developed skills in literacy and numeracy contribute to the pupils' often exceptional progress over time. Their overall success is promoted by their positive attitudes and excellent relationships with one another and through the excellent, demanding and interesting teaching which they receive. They concentrate exceptionally well from the earliest age, they thoroughly enjoy their studies and reason and think for themselves.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development from the EYFS onwards is outstanding and is supported by excellent pastoral care. High levels of self-esteem and confidence are encouraged through the many opportunities to celebrate success. Pupils are highly considerate towards one another, enjoying high quality relationships between themselves and with staff. They talk enthusiastically about their work and their school. They show a strong sense of responsibility and actively involve themselves in all aspects of school life. Their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves shows in their positive approach to charitable giving.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are outstanding, ensuring that the aims of the school are met. The governors have guided the school's strategic development highly successfully. They are committed to the academic progress and personal development of the pupils and as a result have embarked on a continuous programme to enhance the facilities to meet the needs of the school. Leadership ensures that policies and procedures are robust and support the pupils' welfare strongly. They provide clear direction which contributes to the pupils' excellent achievement and ensures the smooth running of the school. The school promotes excellent links with parents, who responded extremely positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The school has successfully addressed the recommendations of the last inspection to improve the systems for monitoring pastoral and academic progress.

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. Disseminate the approach to assessment and marking in core subjects across all subject areas.
 2. In the EYFS, develop further the evaluation of assessment and planning across the setting.

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 the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is outstanding, with excellent standards in academic work and in extra-curricular activities. All pupils, including those with LDD and the more able, make excellent progress. This is in line with the school's aim to encourage each child to fulfil his or her potential within all areas of school life.
- 3.2 At all stages of the school, pupils show strong levels of knowledge and understanding, and display excellent literacy and numeracy skills. Creative abilities and reasoning skills are developed to a high standard. In science they show great confidence as they explain their predicted results as they investigate the use of light bulbs in parallel. Pupils use their numeracy skills confidently across the curriculum, for example creating data graphs in geography. They are extremely articulate and use this skill competently in discussion with each other and with adults. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are used well both in discrete lessons and across the curriculum. For example, in an art activity pupils manipulated images competently to provide a basis for a painting.
- 3.3 Individual and team achievements in extra-curricular activities are excellent, enabled by the high quality of both teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy considerable success in music where they attain high levels, often with distinction. High levels of success at local and regional levels are common in the many sports played, such as tennis, football, netball and hockey as well as national success in swimming and athletics.
- 3.4 The pupils' overall attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national norm but on the evidence available it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations from the EYFS upward. Inspection judgements confirm this evaluation of the pupils' attainment and indicate that pupils make exceptional progress in their learning over time in relation to those of similar ability. At the age of eleven many pupils gain entrance to highly selective maintained schools and at the ages of eleven and thirteen others receive academic, music, sports and all-rounder scholarships to a variety of independent secondary schools in the area. The pupils' excellent achievement and exceptional progress is supported by the breadth and challenge of the curriculum followed, their excellent attitudes to learning and their creative and inquisitive minds. This is reflected through the excellent displays around the school, from imaginative creative writing to the outstanding design and technology (DT) and art work.
- 3.5 Pupils work highly successfully both independently and with others. They organise themselves exceptionally well, showing high levels of concentration, and the high quality of the presentation of their work demonstrates the effort that they put into it.

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

- 3.6 The school's wide and challenging curriculum and programme of extra-curricular activities is of outstanding quality. It provides a high standard of broad, all-round education, helping each child to fulfil his or her potential and having a positive effect on their personal development and achievement. The school meets its aim to challenge and stimulate the pupils to achieve their best through curricular provision

that is appropriate for different abilities and ages. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated that they were immensely satisfied with the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities offered at the school.

- 3.7 The curriculum is broad and balanced; all national curriculum subjects are taught, as well as French, religious education (RE), personal, social and health education (PSHE) and Latin, which is taught from Year 7. In Years 7 and 8 pupils follow the 13+ Common Entrance syllabus. In the pre-prep the creative curriculum ensures excellent cross-curricular links and draws on personal experiences. Specialist teaching starts in the EYFS and is gradually increased until all teaching is by knowledgeable specialist teachers.
- 3.8 The curriculum is extremely well planned to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school. Curriculum overviews are supported by thorough medium term planning and exemplary individual lesson plans which demonstrate a keen awareness of the needs of pupils of differing abilities. Pupils with LDD are clearly identified. Learning support staff both withdraw them on a one-to-one basis and provide support within the classroom, linking learning to individual education plans. Pupils with EAL are identified and work is planned for them if necessary. Similarly, particularly able children are identified and supported through curriculum enrichment activities and in lessons.
- 3.9 The school provides an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular subjects; including drama, music, art and animation, a variety of sporting opportunities such as gymnastics and basketball, and 'Fun Science.' These add to the pupils' all-round breadth of experience, their social interaction and their enjoyment of school life. In addition, whole school cross-curricular events further broaden the pupils' aesthetic development; these include a creativity week, French themed days and Chinese workshops. Pupils benefit greatly from the opportunities to take their learning off-site, visiting art galleries, castles and an outdoor learning centre as part of their geography field work. Trips to France and, each year, a ski trip, add to their independence and experience. Strong links with the community include invitations to local primary schools to attend science activities and sporting tournaments, the support of charities, both local and national, and the twinning of the school with a French village.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 The quality of teaching is outstanding and fully supports the school's aim to encourage pupils to develop lively and inquiring minds, a thirst for learning and positive attitudes to independent study. It makes a strong contribution to the pupils' achievement throughout the school. The thorough subject knowledge displayed in teaching enables pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with particular learning needs to make excellent progress, acquire new knowledge and develop highly effective learning skills.
- 3.11 Teaching demonstrates high expectations of pupils, who in turn report that lessons are 'fun.' Thorough and considered lesson planning ensures that a variety of teaching methods and activities are deployed to cater for every style of learning. The brisk pace of most lessons encourages the pupils to be attentive to the work being asked of them, to apply themselves with concentration and to behave exceptionally well. Pupils are strongly encouraged through careful questioning to think for themselves, discuss openly, and assume responsibility for their own learning. The occasional occurrence of less successful teaching is as a result of

lack of pace and encouragement for pupils to think for themselves. Supportive and caring relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils and pupils, allow teaching to be effectively delivered and foster application. Praise and encouragement are frequently given which empower pupils to tackle learning confidently. The use of subject-specific rooms for art, DT, science and ICT, along with the school grounds, including onsite games and swimming facilities, to support teaching enhances the learning experience for pupils.

- 3.12 Since the last inspection there has been significant development of the use of computer-based systems to monitor the pupils' academic progress. Standardised tests of attainment are used to identify any pupil who may benefit from additional help or challenge. In mathematics, English and science formal assessment is used effectively to track and monitor the pupils' progress. However, assessment in other subjects does not always fully identify progression in subject-specific skills. The pupils' self-assessment encourages them to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses, thus assisting them in their learning. The marking of the pupils' work is regular, and some is of high quality, but this is not consistently found across all teaching. In the best marking, encouraging comments are made, together with practical suggestions for improvement. Pupils strongly appreciate the frequent verbal feedback which enables them to understand what needs to be done to improve.

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 the pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school fulfils its aim to promote the pupils' happiness and well-being as members of a caring community. The pupils are confident and friendly, polite and welcoming.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The pupils at the pre-prep assembly celebrating the Chinese New Year responded with awe and empathy as the music played and the lion and the dragons woke up. Through the provision of the school chapel pupils are given the opportunity to celebrate their own faith and develop spiritually, participating in confirmation and the weekly Eucharist. The pupils are highly respectful of each other. They listen to the views and ideas of their peers and co-operate extremely effectively. They express their feelings thoughtfully. Their high self-esteem is cultivated exceptionally well through celebrating their achievements in assemblies, through displays on the electronic notice board and in the weekly newsletters. They feel safe and secure encouraging their emotional development.
- 4.3 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They are encouraged from an early age to understand the difference between right and wrong through the golden values which are displayed in each pre-prep classroom, and then through the code of conduct in the prep department. This they do highly effectively. Pupils are strongly aware of those less fortunate than themselves and choose to support and contribute to a number of charities throughout the year, including guide dogs for the blind and an appeal to support less fortunate children at Christmas. A charity breakfast was very well attended in the Michaelmas term in support of schools in Africa. Pupils reflect and consider carefully on moral issues, such as in a pre-prep assembly where they considered the importance of treating people carefully.
- 4.4 Pupils of all ages are extremely well developed socially and interact highly effectively. They care for one another and are courteous and polite when greeting their peers, staff and visitors. Pupils recognise the importance of their own part in helping their school community through the numerous opportunities to take on responsibilities from the EYFS onwards. They carry the register to the school office, clear tables at lunch and represent their class on the school council. House and sports captains, head girl and boy are elected by the staff whilst pupils vote for such positions as form captain and vice-captain, and for school council representatives. These opportunities develop their understanding of the electoral system. Pupils feel valued for their contributions and report that their ideas are listened to by staff and considered by the school.
- 4.5 Cultural development is strong. Pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own in the pre-prep is enhanced by topics such as 'Around the World.' Throughout the school they develop an effective insight into other beliefs and religions through the RE curriculum. They are encouraged to experience tastes and foods from other countries through themed international days provided by the catering department. Pupils are given the opportunity to increase their cultural knowledge through gallery visits and the study of artists and techniques, and develop their creativity through the excellent art and DT curriculum and extra-curricular provision.

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

- 4.6 Pastoral care and provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. It is clear in the pupils' responses to questionnaires, and in discussions, that they greatly appreciate the support and guidance given by their teachers. Pupils thrive in an environment which promotes extremely positive relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves, meeting the aims of the school.
- 4.7 In response to the last inspection report the school has succeeded in developing a pastoral system which is consistent and effective, supported and monitored by all staff. Regular staff meetings are held at which the agenda is devoted solely to the wellbeing and personal development of the pupils. During these every child is discussed and future action noted on the pastoral database. Teachers and support staff provide outstanding help and guidance. Pupils state that they feel safe and very well cared for. The pastoral system promotes a smooth transition from the pre-prep into the prep department, and for pupils moving onto their senior schools.
- 4.8 Effective procedures and policies are in place to promote excellent behaviour among the pupils and to prevent bullying. In interviews pupils had a good knowledge of internet safety and what constitutes cyber-bullying. The safe use of ICT equipment is explained at the beginning of appropriate lessons. In the pupil questionnaire and in discussions, pupils reported that bullying is not an issue; they were equally confident that, if it did occur, the matter would be dealt with promptly and appropriately. As well as displaying exceptional politeness and courtesy to adults, pupils treat each other with similarly outstanding courtesy. Very many parents answering the parental questionnaire praised the high expectations and exemplary standards of behaviour achieved by pupils. Although a very small number of pupils expressed concern in the questionnaire about whether teachers are fair, when interviewed pupils were highly supportive of the system of rewards and sanctions.
- 4.9 Numerous opportunities for pupils to take exercise, in physical education lessons, games, during inside and outside play, and in extra-curricular activities, ensure that pupils have ample opportunity to participate in regular exercise. Healthy eating and the importance of a good diet are included as part of the curriculum and this is supported by school meals that are healthy and nutritious.
- 4.10 Thorough procedures and policies support the welfare, health and safety of pupils in the EYFS and throughout the school. The safeguarding of pupils is strong. The training for inter-agency working for designated training officers is up to date and all others working in the school have been appropriately trained. The policy is in line with requirements and is appropriate. Suitable measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. There is an appropriate accessibility plan for those who have disabilities. Health and safety procedures are robust and risk assessments cover all areas of school life. Facilities for those who become ill during the school day are good. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Excellent governance successfully ensures that the school's aims are met. The governing body includes professionals with a range of expertise and experience, including parents of former pupils. Governors have a strong strategic vision and are highly involved in financial matters and planning for the school's future. Effective committees oversee the work of the school. Additionally governors have specific responsibilities for child protection, health and safety, pupils with LDD and the EYFS, enabling them to provide targeted support in these areas with some appropriate training taking place to extend their knowledge and expertise. Through careful planning, governors provide high standards of accommodation and ensure that material and human resources are used to best advantage to support the needs of the pupils. To this end, governors have successfully identified the needs of the pre-prep and have invested appropriately in the rebuilding of this site.
- 5.2 The governing body carries through their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety highly effectively. The governors have strong relationships with the school and provide excellent support. The chairman is frequently in touch with the headmaster and governors visit the school regularly. To extend their knowledge and understanding some attend school for a day visiting lessons and talking to pupils and staff. These visits, along with the regular reports of senior managers and the presentations of other members of staff regarding subject development, give governors a complete insight into the school, its achievements and its challenges, and enable them to support improvement.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management is excellent throughout the school. It enables the school fully to achieve its aims to challenge and stimulate all pupils to achieve their best. The leadership of the headmaster and the strong support of the senior management team help to provide clear goals and a strong sense of direction. This ensures that all pupils receive the highest quality of education, to equip them for the next stage of their education. Heads of department and subject co-ordinators manage their subjects efficiently and thoroughly monitor the quality of teaching through lesson observations and work scrutinies. However, the effective use of assessment to identify the progression of specific skills is not yet consistent across all subjects. The school educational development plan complements the school's four-year plan and together they set out appropriate areas for development and improvement. All the dedicated staff are involved and the clarity of the school's vision is reflected in the extremely high quality of the pupils' achievement and personal development. Non-teaching staff make an important contribution to the pupils' development through their support roles within the school community.
- 5.4 Well-implemented whole-school policies are regularly reviewed and provide guidance to help achieve the school's commitment to the highest standards. The school has effective systems for securing and supporting high quality staff who have a range of expertise and experience. The careful induction procedures are appreciated by new staff. The school's recruitment procedures are robust and all staff are suitably checked. The effective appraisal system is valued by staff and they appreciate the many opportunities for in-service training which ensure progressive

staff development. All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The central register of appointments is properly maintained. The school's premises are used to best advantage, with the extensive grounds and subject-specific rooms contributing much to the quality of the education provided.

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

- 5.5 Links between the school and parents are outstanding and strongly support the aims of the school to enable the pupils' academic and personal development. The parents' responses to pre-inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. Parents commented very favourably on the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities offered, the high standards expected of pupils and the support given to them to achieve these. An almost unanimous positive response was given on pastoral matters. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- 5.6 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are given access to all relevant information about the school. Progress reports are provided each term to keep parents informed of their child's attainment and effort in each subject. At the end of the academic year a detailed report is issued. These reports are comprehensive and provide information on all subjects. In the best, information is provided on progress and meaningful targets are set.
- 5.7 Communication with parents is highly effective and includes an electronic system that enables messages to be sent to parents, providing details of any emergencies and changes. The weekly newsletter is a comprehensive source of information celebrating the pupils' achievements, highlighting past and future events, charity fund-raising, school trips and sporting results. The yearly magazine is an excellent publication and a record of the school's achievements and activities.
- 5.8 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school through assemblies, concerts and performances. The parents and friends association is a thriving body which organises many social and fund raising events, such as the recent Burns Night and a summer ball. The school maintains many open and varied channels of communication, including a comprehensive website which is regularly updated with news and bulletins, weekly newsletters and electronic notice boards. Parents are encouraged to liaise closely with the teaching staff and play a part in the education of their children by attending assemblies, academic information evenings and 'future school' discussions.
- 5.9 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. Parental concerns are treated with care and consideration. The headmaster and the head of pre-prep hold regular meetings for parental form representatives to discuss aspects of school life and to seek the parents' views.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. It meets the needs of every child by recognising that each one is unique, and by providing opportunities well matched to individual needs, enabling all to make progress. Practitioners give high priority to welfare and safeguarding so that children enjoy their learning; thus, the school fulfils its aim to provide a safe, happy, and secure environment. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of the provision and have identified areas for continuous improvement. The recommendation from the last inspection has been implemented but not fully refined.

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

6.1 Leadership and management are outstanding because practitioners work as a united team. All policies and procedures are in place to ensure that children are safeguarded. Excellent partnerships with parents and outside agencies offer additional expertise, enabling staff to provide high quality care. The parental questionnaire and conversations with parents confirm that they are overwhelmingly supportive. Regular monitoring of academic and welfare standards allow practitioners to identify clear priorities for future improvement. As a non-selective school, adults are highly committed to providing equality of opportunity, and encourage children to value diversity and difference. Regular staff training has a positive impact on the children's learning. Very good quality resources are used effectively and well maintained.

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

6.2 The quality of provision is outstanding. Staff are highly skilled in helping children to make rapid progress in all areas of learning by creating an exciting environment, enabling them to become active learners. Practitioners are particularly sensitive to the needs of the under-threes, encouraging them to try new activities in a warm, secure environment so that they gain confidence. The three- to five-year-olds are provided with challenging critical thinking and problem-solving activities both indoors and out. Specialist teaching in music, French, PE and dance and a wide range of extra-curricular activities further enhance the curriculum. Assessment, tracking and planning are comprehensive but the setting has identified the need to develop further the use of this information. Practitioners effectively promote health and safety by constantly reinforcing good hygiene routines and by teaching children about the safe use of equipment. Regular checks ensure that indoor and outdoor environments are safe.

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

6.3 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They enjoy learning, are well motivated and are developing good learning skills. Children under three were confident trying new activities and were particularly keen to use their newly acquired vocabulary and demonstrate their skills with programmable toys. By the end of the EYFS children

have made rapid progress across all six curriculum areas. Their skills are particularly strong in communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy and ICT. Reception children held interesting conversations about progress and the targets they had set themselves. They write simple sentences with well formed letters. They count accurately to twenty, identify shapes in the environment and describe the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. The children's personal development is outstanding. They are self-reliant and their behaviour is exemplary. They understand each other's differences and show respect by sharing and taking turns. Children feel safe and enjoy making a positive contribution as helpers. They are highly active, understand how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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

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.

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 chairman 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 Sara Wiggins	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Pauline Bennett-Mills	Head, IAPS School
Mrs Nicola Fortune	Curriculum Director, IAPS School
Mrs Valerie Goode	Early Years Lead Inspector
Ms Emma Stratford	Early Years Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)