



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WELLOW HOUSE SCHOOL  
STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Wellow House School

Full Name of School	<b>Wellow House School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>891/6013</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>528234</b>		
Address	<b>Wellow House School Wellow Newark Nottinghamshire NG22 0EA</b>		
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Email Address	<b>wellowhouse@btinternet.com</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Peter Cook</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr John Pearce</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>134</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (74 boys; 60 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>29</b>	5-11: <b>67</b>
	11-13:	<b>38</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>134</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>20</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Alison Corbett</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>08 Feb 2011 to 09 Feb 2011</b>		
	<b>09 Mar 2011 to 11 Mar 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in May 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 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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

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

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

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wellow House is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of three and thirteen years. At present, it offers a flexible boarding service for up to twenty pupils. It was founded in 1971, backed by an educational trust, the Stewart Trust, as a preparatory school for boys aged seven to thirteen. It became co-educational in 1985 and the pre-preparatory department was established in 1987. The school is situated in and around a Victorian mansion in extensive parkland in Sherwood Forest. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is set within the purpose-built pre-preparatory department with space for outside play.
- 1.2 The Stewart Trust retains the rights to the property and returns the nominal rent to the school for the provision of bursaries and scholarships. A second educational charitable trust owns Wellow House School Limited, and its two directors oversee the financial management of the school and the contribution of the ten members whom they appoint to the governing body.
- 1.3 The school aims to make the most of each pupil's academic potential, to develop the talents of each individual, and to educate pupils in good citizenship. It seeks to achieve these aims through a close and supportive rapport between teachers and pupils, a family atmosphere of care and welfare, an extensive programme of after-school activities, and flexibility in its boarding arrangements.
- 1.4 There are 134 pupils on roll, including 29 in the EYFS, 67 in Years 1 to 6 and 38 in Years 7 and 8. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN) and no pupils have English as an additional language. The school has identified 22 other pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 17 of whom receive specialist learning support from the staff. The school does not set academic tests on entry, although there is an informal assessment procedure from Year 1. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. The ability range is fairly wide in some year groups.
- 1.5 The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage with a few from minority ethnic groups. Their families live within a radius of twenty miles of the school, and mostly have business, professional or farming backgrounds. Pupils move on to a wide range of day and boarding schools, and virtually all leavers achieve entry to their first choice of senior school.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school in the EYFS setting and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

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

School	NC name
Foundation Stage 1	Nursery
Foundation Stage 2	Reception

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and of their learning, attitudes and basic skills is good, as in the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities and needs are successfully educated, from the EYFS onwards, in a caring, supportive family atmosphere. Welfare and safeguarding arrangements are of a very high standard. In relation to their ability, pupils make good progress over time and are successful in their learning. They are attentive, interested and well behaved in lessons. Although it lacks great variation in methods, good, and at times excellent, teaching by well-qualified staff ensures that pupils have a strong foundation of knowledge, understanding and skills across a broad curriculum. This is supported and enriched by a varied range of extra-curricular activities and sports which pupils enjoy and in which they frequently excel. Support for those with LDD or SEN is of good quality and those of high ability are also nurtured and encouraged.
- 2.2 The quality of personal development is good; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very well developed. Relationships overall are excellent and pupils are confident, articulate, polite and sociable, very willing to contribute to the community and take responsibility.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are of high quality overall. The directors and governors are extremely committed and effective, and united in their support of the school's ethos; they are kept up to date with educational developments and standards. Leadership is excellent and management is strong. At middle management level, several subjects are exceptionally well led and managed, while others are less well organised. The recommendations from the last inspection have been attended to systematically. Standardised testing has been introduced and the provision of textbooks has improved. Significant expenditure has improved information and technology (ICT) resources. The role of head of department remains underdeveloped in some subjects. Parents expressed clear satisfaction with the school's governance, direction and management, the education and support provided for their children, and the quality of information from and communication with the school. They were especially happy with pastoral care and guidance, the high standards of behaviour, the worthwhile attitudes and values and the good range of extra-curricular activities. A few parents considered that they were not sufficiently encouraged to be involved in the life and work of the school, but the inspectors considered that the school values its parents and their contribution and makes them welcome.

## **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. Extend the range of teaching methods by identifying and disseminating best practice across the school.
2. Develop the marking policy and work scrutiny arrangements to ensure that pupils receive relevant and meaningful feedback and are guided towards the next steps for learning.
3. Focus continuous professional development on teaching and learning and the development of subject leadership in the preparatory department.
4. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, further pursue the possibility of extending outdoor activities to enable even more independent learning.

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

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

- 3.1 Overall, pupils' achievement is good. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are successfully educated and the school's aims are fulfilled. Standards are above average, and many pupils make good progress over time in relation to their ability. Pupils benefit from and enjoy an all-round education and achieve a commendable range of successes in curricular and extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, where several achieve county recognition.
- 3.2 Pupils' levels of knowledge, understanding and skill are secure in both curricular and extra-curricular activities, and their academic success is a significant strength of the school. Good speaking and listening skills, and confident reading skills, were observed throughout. Pupils enjoy reading and appreciate the importance of books. Enjoyment of writing, particularly creative writing, is encouraged from an early age; this leads to high standards in senior years. Numeracy skills and mathematical ability develop steadily, even where pupils lack confidence in their own ability. They apply their mathematical skills well in science experiments and are happy to discuss their ICT work. Creative work in art and design is of a high standard. The majority of pupils are passionate about sport and improving their skills.
- 3.3 Pupils with SEN or LDD achieve well in relation to their ability through well-judged support and encouragement which reinforces their basics skills. Able, gifted and talented pupils are suitably challenged and achieve very well in class and in enrichment activities.
- 3.4 Opportunities were limited to observe pupils using their initiative or applying their knowledge logically. However, they spoke knowledgeably about science investigations such as testing the 'dunkability' of biscuits; they enjoy debating, making deductions from historical evidence and the challenge of the outdoor pursuits programme.
- 3.5 There is a range of scholarships and exhibitions to major independent schools, boarding and day, for achievement in academic work, art, sport, and riding. Pupils are encouraged and supported in their interests outside school. Their many successes in drama, music, riding, ice-skating, fencing, archery, tennis, motorbike scrambling and golf are recognised and praised.
- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against national tests but on inspection evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils follow a broad curriculum based initially on the National Curriculum, and subsequently on the requirements of the Common Entrance examination. The school has a good success rate at Common Entrance, with a high proportion proceeding each year to selective independent or maintained schools.
- 3.7 Pupils' level of attainment indicates that they make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. This was evident in most subjects throughout the age and ability range in written work, and in curriculum interviews. Results in nationally standardised progress tests in English and mathematics, introduced since the previous inspection, also indicate good progress overall.

3.8 Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning from an early age. They are attentive and well motivated, and work successfully on their own. They have limited opportunities to work collaboratively, but are able to work sensibly together when required. Year 3 pupils were very responsive in a lesson about country life in China; they made comparisons and asked perceptive questions. Year 8 pupils were eager to answer questions with well-developed answers. Pupils show great enthusiasm for their extra-curricular activities. They are very proud to represent the school and show immense determination and loyalty in training and in their matches.

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

3.9 Curricular and extra-curricular provision makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and other achievements and to their personal development. A broad curriculum, appropriate to their ages and abilities covers the requisite areas of learning effectively and supports the school's aim to make the most of each pupil's academic potential. In the pre-preparatory department, there is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the development of basic skills. Setting arrangements for phonics sessions enable pupils between the ages of three and seven to work in appropriate groupings and similarly clear arrangements for pupils at different stages in numeracy enable all pupils to make good progress.

3.10 In addition to National Curriculum subjects, all pupils study French from Reception and most begin Latin in Year 6; additional English is available for pupils who do not take Latin. From Year 5 upwards, specialist staff teach in designated subject rooms. In Years 3 and 4, English and mathematics are taught by form teachers and pupils benefit from specialist teaching in other subjects. In the pre-preparatory department, music, ICT, swimming and games are taught by specialists, although to a lesser extent in the EYFS. Throughout the school, ICT is taught as a discrete subject; its use and application in other subjects is fairly limited, although progress is being made, particularly in English.

3.11 All pupils are assessed in Year 3 through nationally standardised verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests, introduced since the previous inspection. New pupils are assessed on entry for specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Focused learning support, funded by parents, is available for pupils with an identified need. Individual education plans, reviewed and updated termly, are available to staff who teach those pupils and to their parents. Learning support staff liaise frequently to ensure that additional lessons reinforce and support class teaching. Less structured support is available for pupils whose parents do not opt for additional lessons. Pupils with academic or sporting gifts and talents are also identified and encouraged to excel.

3.12 Pupils' personal development is enhanced by an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. The range is decided both by staff interest and skills and by pupil and parental requests. Pupils' involvement helps to develop their self-confidence. They enjoy daily sport both within and beyond the curriculum. Cricket, football, hockey, rugby, netball and swimming offer pupils the opportunity to take part in regular matches which are enjoyed as an important part of school life. Additional coaches broaden the choice with riding, golf and archery. Pupils take part in regular drama productions, as well as optional lessons for external examinations. Visits, both day and residential, are well planned and include local visits, history and geography field excursions and an annual ski trip; many of these support work in school and add to pupils' academic and personal development.

- 3.13 Virtually all the parents who responded to the questionnaire were pleased with the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities available, as were their children.
- 3.14 Since the previous inspection, educational provision has continued to improve, with the EYFS enjoying more activities outdoors, tending their vegetable patch and feeding the school chickens. The library has been developed, as has ICT provision with a new suite of computers, new network systems throughout the school, two interactive whiteboards, and provision for data logging in science. The timetable has been improved by moving activities to Saturday mornings and lessons to Thursday afternoons.

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

- 3.15 Overall, teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress; it supports the aims of the school well and makes an important contribution to pupils' achievements.
- 3.16 Staff have a secure subject knowledge; the vast majority encourage and nurture their pupils and understand their needs. Lessons are usually well planned and progression in learning is evident. Pupils' interest is fostered and generally they respond positively in lessons. Consideration of individual needs is evident in the best lessons and, in many cases, this is by support and work planned to give successful outcomes for different ability levels, including pupils with special needs or learning difficulties or disabilities. On the whole, time is used well and lessons start and end promptly. Behaviour is managed well, with very few exceptions, and pupils are generally focused in lessons. However, the presentation of written work is variable.
- 3.17 Although the quality of teaching is good, and at times excellent, a relatively narrow range of teaching methods was observed, and in many lessons teaching resources appeared limited. Teaching does not always make the best use of opportunities to use practical equipment in mathematics in the preparatory school. In the pre-preparatory department, group work assists pupils in consolidating their learning and adds to their enjoyment of the subject.
- 3.18 Older pupils have opportunities to develop independent learning skills; some individual studies in Year 8 were excellent. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about a geography field project and the use of source material in history. Year 6 pupils related their lessons on erosion in geography to examples they had seen in their own environment. They demonstrated independent thought and pride in their achievements. Opportunities to develop and extend their independent learning are less widely available to pupils in other years. The library is excellent but its size limits its use as a resource centre in which to develop study skills. Year 3 pupils enjoy the library so much that they considered they should have regular time to use the library for independent work.
- 3.19 Links between the pre-preparatory and preparatory departments have developed since the last inspection, although they are not yet consistent in all subject areas. In the pre-preparatory department, staff observe each other's lessons and share in the scrutiny, assessment and moderation of pupils' work; however, this valuable peer monitoring is not firmly established as a part of staff professional development in the preparatory department.
- 3.20 Class sizes mean that teachers know their pupils well and are able to give individual attention, as with Year 6 pupils sewing and ironing competently following individual

tuition. The majority of lesson plans provided well for those pupils who might need additional support or extension work.

- 3.21 Work is regularly marked, although feedback does not often give pupils guidance towards the next steps. The best marking offers advice on how to improve future performance, but more common are numerical scores or ticks. Pupils' work is assessed frequently, and pupils and parents are aware of attainment through percentages on weekly review cards. This regular assessment is not used consistently in all areas to plan for progress. However, since the last inspection nationally standardised assessments have been introduced, as recommended, and some use is being made of this data to track the progress of cohorts and individuals and ensure their progression in learning.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have very well-developed personal qualities and treat each other and adults with respect. Staff provide very good role models and relationships are excellent. Parental responses showed that virtually all were pleased with the attitudes promoted and the high standards of behaviour and manners. Pupils commented in their questionnaire responses that the school had helped them to develop as people.
- 4.2 The school's caring, committed ethos, firmly based on Christian values but also encouraging interest in and respect for all faiths, leads to the pupils' effective spiritual development. Pupils commented on the peace and beauty of the school grounds. Classical music during an art lesson provided a sense of peace and encouraged contemplation. Religious studies broadens pupils' experiences, and many were moved when visiting the nearby Holocaust Centre, each placing a stone on the memorial. Pupils showed sensitivity and thoughtfulness as they practised for the end-of-term service. An excellent assembly by a visiting bishop encouraged pupils to consider topical issues such as nuclear energy and politics.
- 4.3 Pupils make very clear distinctions between right and wrong. They are thoughtful and courteous and have a definite awareness of the needs of others, both within and beyond the school community. They take the lead in various fundraising initiatives, currently helping to provide holidays for children from Chernobyl. A poetry book written in response to natural disasters and sold locally raised considerable funds for disaster relief. A sense of fair play is developed through sport. Topics for Year 8 debates, based on suggestions from pupils, show awareness of issues where discussion is important and of situations where the actions of some may have repercussions on others. Year 7 pupils had a good concept of ethical buying as they discussed farming in Kenya.
- 4.4 Pupils have an excellent sense of social responsibility. They are very polite, helpful and well mannered. The school council enables pupils to be active in decision-making and they regard its conclusions with respect, as they have opportunities to make suggestions to develop the school's facilities and to take responsibility. Pupils as young as Year 3 were aware of the need to balance their requests to improve the school with realism about the cost. Younger pupils named the heads of houses as people they would trust to take action if they needed help. Senior pupils are proud to be chosen to help with junior trips and activities.
- 4.5 Regular news quizzes, discussion sessions in form time and personal, social and health education lessons raise pupils' awareness of current affairs and local and national services and institutions; pupils speak positively about these activities, which prepare them to be good citizens. The school shares its talents with members of the local community, singing to them at Christmas and inviting local elderly residents to attend performances of plays and concerts.
- 4.6 Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures are developing well through the curriculum. Regular theatre trips broaden pupils' cultural experience. Younger pupils study life in China. Older pupils relate their classroom learning to the differing effects of earthquakes in developed and underdeveloped parts of the world, and empathise with the needs of people in poorer countries. All

pupils enjoy theme days, when the catering staff include food from around the world in their menus.

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

- 4.7 The excellent quality of the pastoral care and the school's undoubted commitment to the welfare, health and safety of its pupils combine to make a significant contribution to their personal development.
- 4.8 The school very successfully meets its aims of providing a close and supportive rapport between teachers and pupils and creating a family atmosphere of care and welfare. Staff provide highly effective support and guidance and are ever mindful of pupils' welfare. There are extremely positive relationships throughout the school community, including support and catering staff, who also contribute to pastoral care. Almost all parents who responded were pleased with the level of care given to their children.
- 4.9 There are robust systems for pastoral support, mainly through the form teacher in the first instance, although due to the school's size children know many of the staff well and feel secure in approaching them. Communication between staff is good and they are very aware of the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the pupils, as much information is shared informally and speedily. Opportunities are taken to praise pupils' achievements in both academic and non-academic areas, helping to develop pupils' self-esteem.
- 4.10 Very effective procedures promote good behaviour and guard against harassment and bullying. Overall, pupils behave very well indeed; they know what is expected of them. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in a firm but understanding way by the majority of staff, although sometimes pupils consider that adults are not always fair in their judgements.
- 4.11 Pupils interviewed all expressed the view that bullying was wrong and showed an awareness of the various forms it could take and what to do about it. The incidence of bullying within the school is very low, and pupils were confident that rare instances had been dealt with effectively by staff, who are not complacent and remain alert. Pupils know that there are people they can turn to if they or a friend are being bullied. They are positive that if this happened, then something would be done to stop it.
- 4.12 Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are comprehensive and staff receive regular and appropriate training. Safe recruitment training has taken place and correct procedures are closely followed.
- 4.13 All necessary measures are taken to ensure that risks from fire and other hazards are minimised. Fire drills are held regularly and records kept. Staff are well trained and aware, and procedures are efficiently established. Health and safety are taken very seriously and risk assessments across the school, particularly in subjects such as science, are comprehensive. The school is fortunate to have a full-time matron, and pupils, including boarders, who are unwell are very carefully looked after in a well-appointed new medical room until collected by their parents.
- 4.14 Careful consideration is given to planning for educational access for pupils with special educational needs, difficulties or disabilities. Great care is taken to provide enjoyable, nutritious meals and pupils are aware of the need to eat a balanced lunch

and to exercise regularly; pupils and staff appreciate the high standard of the catering, and there is a happy, caring family atmosphere in the dining room.

- 4.15 Daily registration of pupils is well organised and the admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.16 The boarding experience which is offered to pupils is of good quality. Although it is limited to a few children on a few nights each week, often before or after a school trip or on Friday nights before Saturday activities or matches, nevertheless, it plays a valuable part in both their academic and wider education and their personal development. During the inspection days, no pupils were boarding overnight.
- 4.17 Parents and their children are appreciative of the service which is offered. Pupils spoke in a very mature way of how much they felt it had benefited them to have this experience and how much it would help them when they moved on to boarding schools for the next stage of their education.
- 4.18 Staff with boarding responsibilities are caring and supportive. Pupils benefit from the warm and friendly relationships which develop within the boarding community, and every effort is made to ensure that they have enjoyable and worthwhile activities before bedtime. The quality of the accommodation is good. It is welcoming and comfortable, and there are pleasant common rooms.

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

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

- 5.1 The school benefits from governance of high quality. The governing body, together with the directors of the charitable trust, have a range of valuable and relevant experience and expertise. Together, they provide active, effective and constructive oversight of the school and wholeheartedly support its aims.
- 5.2 The governors and directors ensure that their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources are discharged as carefully and efficiently as possible. The directors and several governors have long-standing family connections with the school and give their time and energies generously and unstintingly to its upkeep and development. Effective procedures ensure the fulfilment of the school's aims, the most efficient application possible of funds for resources, proper financial oversight and effective long-term planning. The commitment and financial skill of the directors and the finance committee are invaluable. A measure of the success of the present governing body is the acknowledged improvement in many aspects of the school over recent years.
- 5.3 The governors, through a well-organised system of committees and close co-operation with senior management, have an ever-increasing insight into the working of the school, and are eager for standards to be maintained. The chairman of the recently formed education committee has a programme for visiting lessons, and presentations are made by heads of department to the governing body, augmented by an appropriate head of department from a nearby senior school. The governors are therefore involved in providing not only support, but also stimulus for growth and improvement in all areas of the school. Significant investment has been made over recent years to develop the pre-preparatory department and its facilities.
- 5.4 Governors are also effective in discharging their responsibilities for safeguarding and associated training, safe recruitment, welfare and health and safety. They take expert advice where necessary. School policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed. Governors are kept up to date with educational developments and standards through close liaison with and reports from the headmaster. The main recommendations from the last report have mostly been successfully addressed. Parents indicated a high level of satisfaction and confidence in governance in replies to the questionnaire.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good overall. Leadership is of the highest quality and a strong senior management team (SMT) is totally committed to the fulfilment of the school's aims and ethos. The school benefits greatly from the members of the SMT, who are determined, thoroughly professional and supportive of the leadership. The tireless enthusiasm and drive of the leadership inspires pupils and staff to make their personal commitment to the achievement of the highest possible standards in all they do. At both SMT and middle management levels, the school gains from the combination of the wisdom and experience of established members and the dynamism and enthusiasm of new appointments.
- 5.6 At all levels of responsibility, leadership and management work with evident dedication and loyalty. The recent self-evaluation process is guiding their priorities

and planning. Clear educational direction to staff and pupils is reflected in the commitment of the staff, the quality of the pupils' education, and the high standard of their personal development.

- 5.7 Leadership and management are guided by the school's aims in carrying out their responsibilities, particularly those for the safeguarding of pupils and ensuring their welfare, health and safety. Thorough procedures are in place for checking and recording the suitability of all governors and staff, including volunteers, and for relevant training. However, the quality of educational policies and procedures is inconsistent. Several subjects are exceptionally well led and managed, while others are less well organised. Continuous professional development directed towards management of departments or subjects in the preparatory school is not extensive, as recently it has been mainly directed towards necessary training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Within the school, management is increasingly successful in appointing and supporting well-qualified, highly motivated staff, and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of their pupils.
- 5.8 The recommendations from the last inspection have steadily been attended to. The provision of textbooks has improved, as has ICT provision, but advances in technology result in ever higher expectations, for example an increased number of interactive whiteboards. The role of head of department has developed very successfully in some departments, for example in the pre-preparatory department, including the EYFS, where management is excellent; in others, the monitoring of policies, procedures, resources, teaching and learning, and forward planning across all the year groups is not extensive.

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

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The school has a close and very constructive relationship with parents who are extremely supportive of its aims and the school's commitment to achieving them.
- 5.10 Parents indicated emphatically in their answers to their questionnaire that they are very happy with the governance, direction and management of the school, with the education and support provided for their children, which enables them to make good progress, and with the quality of information from and communication with the school. They were particularly happy with the pastoral care and guidance, the high standards of behaviour, the attitudes and values promoted and the good range of extra-curricular activities.
- 5.11 A few parents considered that they were not sufficiently encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. However, inspectors observed how warmly parents are welcomed into the school community. The very successful parents' association is enthusiastic and committed. Significant sums of money are raised through social events for parents and children by the energetic committee of parents. Pupils and staff submit ideas for improvements within the school and the committee decides upon priorities for expenditure. They have recently purchased toys and equipment for playtimes, although their children would like to have even more. A working party of fathers, led by those with appropriate expertise, recently spent a day clearing woodland. Parents of younger children, in particular, have very good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children by, for example, helping with trips and visits. Their fathers also enjoyed a 'Stay and Play Day' recently.

5.12 Parents of pupils, and of prospective pupils, are provided with the required information about the school and receive clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress twice a year. They also receive a weekly review of marks, but some considered they would prefer more detailed information less frequently. However, when talking to pupils, a few thought it helpful to have this weekly update.

5.13 The school handles the concerns of parents with thoughtfulness and understanding, and follows its published procedures. Significant strengths are the commitment of parents to the school and the loyalty and pride of the whole school community.

**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 is outstanding, with the capacity to sustain improvements. An excellent system of review and self-evaluation ensures that the school meets its aim of providing rich learning experiences which encourage a love of learning and enable children to reach their potential. Staff sustain existing high standards by regularly identifying areas for improvement. Children's needs are very well met through a broad and exciting range of activities. Staff have a clear understanding of children's needs and create a stimulating and colourful environment, where they feel valued and safe. The recommendations of the last Ofsted inspection, to further improve the methods used to record the next steps of learning, have been met.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. A meticulous implementation of policies results in a secure environment where individuals are nurtured by suitable, well-qualified staff. Equality and diversity are promoted appropriately. The continuous and thorough assessment of risk ensures children's safety, with suitable arrangements for safeguarding. Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and expressed a strong appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of care. Parents are regularly informed of their children's progress, often with daily feedback from staff and useful targets set. A progress report or parents' evening is provided each term and parents are encouraged to contribute towards the 'learning journeys'. A recent 'Dads' Stay and Play' event proved extremely popular and a similar event for mothers is planned. The effective use and good management of resources, including those outdoors, lead to successful outcomes for all children.

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

6.3 Provision is outstanding. All children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. A well-judged balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities, which involve choosing, exploring and discovering. Children are observant and inquisitive and staff ask challenging questions to develop their thinking skills. Provision for their welfare, health and safety is exemplary. Good health and well-being are emphasised and healthy meals are encouraged in the dining room. The behaviour policy is implemented well, leading to a 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. They make rapid progress and are on course to meet all the early learning goals, including communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development by the end of their second year. In a phonics session seen, children were able to count syllables, using individual

whiteboards to spell out accurately simple words. In numeracy, children were rolling dice, successfully adding numbers together. They were confident when working with the interactive whiteboard, as when children were able to type in numbers on a number line, confidently adding two numbers together. Children are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated, relating well to one another and to adults. They cooperate well and begin to make choices and decisions. Children respect and trust their teachers. They feel safe when choosing indoor and outdoor play. Staff are pursuing the possibility of extending outdoor activities to enable even more independent learning. Children enjoy their lunches and understand the importance of staying healthy. They are provided with secure foundations for their future well-being.

**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 boarding accommodation 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 Danice Iles

Reporting Inspector

Mr Robin Davies

Headmaster, IAPS school

Mrs Anne Jones

Head of Junior School, GSA school

Mrs Lynda Boden

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector