

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Newton Preparatory School

Full Name of the School	<b>Newton Preparatory School</b>
DCSF Number	<b>212/6385</b>
Address	<b>149 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BX.</b>
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Headmaster	<b>Nicholas Allen</b>
Proprietor	<b>Dr F Walji, Newton Prep Limited</b>
Age Range (of the whole school)	<b>3 to 13</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b>
Head of Early Years Setting	<b>Victoria Goodson</b>
Early Years Age Range	<b>3 to 5</b>
Early Years Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	<b>17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b>

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS 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 does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety

examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the School**

- 1.1 Newton Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged three to thirteen years, founded in 1991 by a family trust whose representative, Dr Walji, oversees the governance of the school by the School Council. Its site occupies just over three acres in Battersea. The headmaster has been in post since 2006.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 554 pupils on roll, of whom 297 were boys and 257 were girls. Lower School encompasses the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 and 2, and Upper School comprises Years 3 to 8. The school prepares pupils for competitive entry to senior schools at the ages of 11 and 13.
- 1.3 The main aims of the school are encompassed in its mission statement, which aspires to offer a vibrant school with a challenging education for inquisitive pupils who are eager to engage fully with the world in which they are growing up. The aims focus on: inspiring pupils to be adventurous and committed in their learning; providing balance and breadth in all aspects of their education; encouraging initiative, individuality, independence, creativity and enquiry; and promoting responsible behaviour and respect for others in a happy, safe and caring environment.
- 1.4 For entry into the Nursery, children are invited in for forty minutes to play. They are informally observed and assessed by staff to look for an inquisitive nature and a desire to learn and communicate. For entry into Reception, pupils are invited for an informal assessment with either the headmaster or the Lower School head. After this age, prospective pupils are invited into the school for one or two days to join in appropriate classes where they are assessed by staff. The school does not take part in national tests at the ages of seven or eleven. Standardised tests are taken from Reception to the end of Year 3, and also in Years 5, 6 and 7. Results indicate that the ability profile is well above the national average.
- 1.5 The school has identified 39 pupils with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although none of these has a statement of special educational needs. The pupils are representative of London's multi-cultural society, with a wide ethnic mix. There are fourteen pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).
- 1.6 Since the last inspection in 2002, the top floor studio, an open space for a variety of activities, known as 'multi-space', and further classrooms have been added, as has another gymnasium and the auditorium. The garden has been extensively developed.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 The educational experience offered to the pupils is highly successful in reflecting the aims and philosophy of the school. The pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum, which, together with the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, provides a rich variety of opportunities for the pupils' academic and personal development. The educational experience provided has maintained the strengths highlighted in the previous inspection report. It has a positive impact on the aesthetic, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, creative and physical development of the pupils. It also enables pupils to reach high intellectual and physical standards and provides the creative and aesthetic development required for them to enter the senior schools of their choice. Provision in the EYFS is good; classrooms are well organised so that a wide range of activities is available.
- 2.2 Pupils are well known by their teachers. They enjoy their education and work in a happy, caring atmosphere. The outstanding quality of display, which includes a great deal of pupils' work, is a strength throughout the school. It adds to pupils' educational experience, as well as supporting the school's aim to enhance their self-esteem. Pupils in the earliest years experience the full range of subjects based on the National Curriculum, with appropriate emphasis on numeracy and literacy. At this stage, subjects are integrated together as enjoyable and stimulating topics, providing a coherent range of learning experiences. Specialist teachers are introduced in the Nursery for ballet, physical education (PE) and music, for French from Reception, information and communication technology (ICT) from Year 1 and art from Year 2. In Year 3, science and drama are also taught by specialists so that by Year 4, pupils are used to experiencing specialist teaching in a wide range of subjects. This encourages independent thinking.
- 2.3 Pupils' experience of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) fully supports the school's aims and ethos. It is woven into the fabric of the school day. Form time, PSHCE lessons, religious education (RE) and assemblies provide valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss with each other and their teachers matters that are important to them. Pupils' experiences and personal development are further enriched by the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available to them. The range of activities is diverse and includes drama, languages, ICT and judo. High quality opportunities are provided for enrichment, with many out-of-school visits. These, together with the recreational, sporting, cultural and residential visits for older pupils, are successful in supporting the aim to provide all pupils with opportunities to take up new interests or develop those that exist.
- 2.4 Arrangements to ensure a smooth continuity of education between each transitional stage are well thought out and effective. Curriculum co-ordinators meet regularly, appropriate records are passed on and discussed, and careful induction procedures are in place to ensure pupils move smoothly to the next stage of their education. Examination practice, verbal reasoning tests, mock interviews and discussion of current affairs all help them in competitive entry to senior schools.
- 2.5 The curriculum is effectively planned and of high quality; well-written curriculum documents provide for continuity of learning and underpin work at every stage. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and revised in the context of the school development plan and the needs of the pupils. It provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, and promotes their participation in a wide range of subjects and activities. The curriculum is well balanced.

- 2.6 The extra help provided for pupils who require learning support, including those with EAL, is thorough and effective, involving excellent liaison between specialist support staff, and form and subject teachers. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged through a structured programme of activities. These, in addition to the scholarship programme, present opportunities for pupils to tackle demanding and challenging work.
- 2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.8 The quality of pupils' learning and achievements is good, with a significant number of outstanding areas, and this standard has been maintained since the last inspection. It meets the aims of the school by inspiring pupils to be adventurous and committed in their learning. In the EYFS, children's achievement is good; they are articulate, make a strong start to independent writing, acquire good numeracy skills and make natural use of ICT, fulfilling the aims of the school.
- 2.9 Pupils demonstrate a high ability to critically analyse what they are taught and to apply previously taught information to different scenarios; they are also challenged to use high level reasoning skills through a range of sources. Their listening skills are strong and they are able to ask intelligent questions and to draw equally intelligent conclusions from what they hear.
- 2.10 They demonstrate a good ability to think independently, and can recognise intellectual structures and apply these effectively to their own work. For example, Year 8 pupils modelled their own poetry after a detailed study of the work of Langston Hughes.
- 2.11 Pupils are mathematically competent and opportunities exist for them to be extended beyond the set curriculum. Pupils are divided into ability sets for mathematics from Year 1 and English from Year 4. A more comprehensive process commences in Year 5 when pupils are further separated into streamed classes for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. This provides the chance for fluid movement between both sets and classes, usually at the end of each term.
- 2.12 Within individual classes, pupils are given work which matches their needs, allowing them to work at their own pace. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils produced fieldwork projects at variable speeds and stages of completion. Opportunities exist outside the curriculum for pupils to obtain additional support through the daily Work Support Programme, where they all have the opportunity to meet with staff and discuss their work. Conversely, more able pupils are provided with occasions for open-ended discussion and homework. For example a science group meets weekly, by invitation, for discussion that aims to foster an environment of excellence and provides the opportunity for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of topics. Other opportunities for matching work to pupils' needs exist within the school. No significant differences in relative attainment were apparent between different groups of pupils or between different subjects.
- 2.13 The school values individual and group achievements. Through a series of effective assemblies, pupils' strengths and contributions are acknowledged. Excellence of all types is clearly valued and recognised as part of the curriculum and within the ethos of the school.
- 2.14 Art is a particular strength of the school and a great deal of excellent multi-media and multi-cultural art is displayed throughout. During inspection week, all Year 5 pupils were rehearsing for a gymnastics display to be shown to parents in December and a good informal

music concert was held to provide younger and beginner musicians with a valuable performance opportunity.

- 2.15 Pupils are well motivated and they are able to study and organise their work independently. In an ICT lesson, Year 6 pupils used their own initiative to research information from the internet, create an itinerary and produce costs for a family to travel from France to England. In Year 2, pupils were gathering facts about the British Isles from a variety of sources. ICT skills throughout the school are developed well. Tasks are often given to be completed at home and these are tackled responsibly and with maturity. Good evidence of note-taking was seen in lessons and work scrutiny. One notable example was seen in a piece of Year 6 geography on micro-climates, where a pupil had enhanced the investigation by recording her findings in the form of a multi-media presentation.
- 2.16 Pupils study and work effectively both as individuals and in groups. Shared tasks are encouraged throughout the school. Girls in Year 7 co-operated extremely well in a netball lesson as they practised their 'flight step' technique in pairs and, in a Year 6 drama lesson, groups of pupils worked together most successfully to explore symbolism. There were many other examples of excellent co-operative learning. Such kindness and consideration for one another is nurtured throughout the school.
- 2.17 Behaviour is exemplary and the quiet and calm atmosphere is ever present. Respect is considered essential and all pupils are polite and courteous to each other and adults. The pupils work with keen concentration and with a very positive approach to both written and practical assignments. However, the presentation of work is often untidy and lacking in consistency.
- 2.18 Pupils arrive promptly to lessons and settle quickly and quietly to their work. They concentrate well, persevere and show great enthusiasm for all they attempt. In a Year 4 English lesson, pupils had a wonderful time creating sound effects for the witches' scene in *Macbeth* and Reception pupils thoroughly enjoyed sharing the story of *Mrs Wobble* as they collaborated thoughtfully to discuss her many problems.
- 2.19 Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school, and they benefit from the many opportunities provided, especially in developing a good level of knowledge, skills, understanding and application.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.20 Pupils demonstrate outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, supported and nurtured by the caring ethos that permeates school life. This is true throughout the school including in the EYFS. The school has built well upon the strengths identified at the last inspection and has raised these further to fully support its aims, especially by encouraging initiative, individuality and independence, and promoting responsible behaviour and respect for others.
- 2.21 Pupils' personal development is underpinned by strong relationships, respect and sensitive consideration for each other's needs. It is reflected throughout the school day by the pupils' relationships with staff and the positive ethos that prevails. Pupils are helped to develop self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose through activities such as assemblies and the structured programmes of RE and PSHCE. Pupils display considerable self-confidence and self-esteem. This is reinforced by the recognition of their achievements in special assemblies. Pupils show understanding and respect for other faiths and customs. Art and drama make an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual awareness by engendering a sense of peace and harmony. The school maintains a good work ethic. In the majority of cases, registration periods are used effectively for organisation; some year groups begin the day with preparation for the day's lessons, with quiet reading, assembly practice, or other pastoral activities.
- 2.22 Pupils have an excellent sense of morality and from the earliest years have a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Relationships are respectful. The clear focus on observing courtesy, consideration and common sense to all members of the school community underpins the strong moral ethos throughout the school. Pupils of all ages respect the school rules and appreciate the fairness of rewards and sanctions. Pupils take practical steps to help others less fortunate than themselves when they raise money for a range of charities. They show an awareness and appreciation of their wider responsibilities which they discuss in lessons. Pupils are unfailingly well mannered; friendliness and helpfulness are the norm.
- 2.23 Pupils show a high degree of social awareness, largely as a result of the value the school places on community life. At all ages, pupils have many opportunities through which they develop, show initiative and contribute to their community. Those with special responsibilities are proud of the contribution they make, from form monitors and pupils in Years 1 and 2 who have their own parliament in the Lower School, to members of the pupils' parliament in Year 8. All pupils learn teamwork and to care for each other through taking part in visits out of school, performing in concerts and productions, and participating in sports events. In the wider social context, pupils have a good knowledge of public institutions and services, appropriate to their age.
- 2.24 Pupils appreciate the wide range of cultural traditions in the world and have an awareness of life beyond their immediate environment. Significant events and festivals from all major world religions are celebrated. Striking art displays reflect pupils' understanding of and interest in the wider world. Pupils gain much from the discussion of different points of view, practices and beliefs, in class, assemblies and drama lessons. Cultural values and experiences are broadened significantly through subjects such as modern foreign languages, literature and the humanities, and through interesting and informative educational visits.
- 2.25 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

## **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.26 Teaching overall is of a high standard, with a significant minority of lessons being outstanding. Teaching promotes high attainment. This is an improvement on the last inspection and, consequently, pupils of all ages and abilities, including those who require learning support, have EAL or take part in the gifted and talented activities, make excellent progress, acquire new knowledge and develop effective skills. Examples of informative, challenging and inspirational teaching were seen, such as in a Year 8 lesson on Harlem Renaissance poetry and drama lessons, where staff used their extensive subject knowledge. These demonstrate that the school is achieving its aim to offer the highest standard of education to all of its pupils.
- 2.27 Teaching in all years presents pupils with a range of well-planned lessons that extend pupils intellectually, emotionally and socially. The bright and stimulating classrooms provide environments conducive to learning.
- 2.28 Pupils are encouraged to think and work for themselves. They displayed their independent learning in a Year 3 geography class on rivers and in a Year 4 mathematics class where boys had put together a guide for missing angles. From the earliest years, pupils are encouraged to work in partnership, sharing ideas and working co-operatively. Every opportunity is taken to develop these working relationships among pupils. For example, lively debate took place during a Year 8 history lesson after a group of pupils had given a multi-media presentation on the Civil War.
- 2.29 During lessons, teachers expect pupils to form their own opinions, answer questions clearly and express their views so as to fully develop their analytical skills. Teachers make clear the learning objectives and pupils are aware of the targets set for them and the success criteria for the work being covered.
- 2.30 The provision of a wide variety of activities and the high expectations by teachers result in lessons in which pupils behave well and enjoy learning. Teachers make full use of pupils' eagerness to learn.
- 2.31 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. This engenders self-confidence and self-esteem. Teaching at all levels is carefully planned; the coherent structure of learning activities provides teachers with a clear direction to the lessons in all years. Most staff are vigilant in their assessment of pupils and undertake thorough, comprehensive assessments of their work. The use of self-assessment was observed in a Year 6 science lesson and peer assessment was seen in art lessons. The system of standardised tests from Reception to Year 7 has been introduced relatively recently. Results of the tests taken from Reception to Year 3 are used effectively to ensure that pupils' progress is carefully monitored. In the best practice, this information is used in planning future lessons, in addition to identifying those pupils who need learning support. Internal analysis of results enables staff to structure the subject sets for the maximum benefit of pupils. The school is aware that currently the approach to assessment, including marking, is inconsistent.
- 2.32 The school maintains records of its own assessments in the form of internal examination results, and all staff keep good records of pupils' attainment in lessons and in their written work. A marking policy exists, but it is interpreted differently between staff and subjects. The very best is positive and helpful, giving pointers to ways in which pupils can improve. Throughout the school, resources are plentiful and appropriate to the ages of the pupils.
- 2.33 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

### **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care, and the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding, as it is in the EYFS. The school has built on these strengths since the last inspection to fully meet its aims of promoting responsible behaviour and respect for others in a happy, safe and caring environment. The school atmosphere is calm, warm and welcoming. Pupils' relationships are excellent, the code of conduct is thoroughly embedded, behaviour is exemplary and children move around the corridors and staircases, without jostling, in a purposeful way. Pupils are courteous, holding doors open and standing aside for others. Pupils have created their own signs encouraging quiet movement on the staircases.
- 3.2 Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and built on mutual respect. There is a high ratio of staff to pupils and the children are well known by the staff. Pupils feel valued and respected, and are relaxed and confident with their teachers who are good role models. Pupils are not afraid to express their feelings, and find staff responsive and decisive when issues arise. Pupils are confident that concerns can be put to the form teacher, or communicated via a 'worry box', and will be addressed sensitively.
- 3.3 Form teachers are supported by a pastoral structure through which they can draw support and advice, and which provides continuity of care for the pupils as they move through the school. The timetable provides form time three times each day; form teachers are therefore able to monitor pupils' organisation and activities, to prepare pupils for forthcoming events and to deal with issues on a one-to-one basis.
- 3.4 Pupils are given opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, and do so conscientiously and with pride. Members of the pupils' parliament meet weekly. The supervising teachers discreetly facilitate mature and measured discussion between the Year 8 members, listening to their inputs and allowing them to express and develop their ideas and decision making processes. Observations in lessons and around the school reveal positive, supportive behaviour among pupils. Interaction between different year groups is warm and friendly. The infrequent occasions of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively by teachers, and teachers' actions are fully accepted by the pupils. A house point system rewards endeavour and good behaviour, and the weekly celebration assembly is used effectively to reinforce the school's values of industry, creativity, kindness and responsibility.
- 3.5 The medical staff provide a warm and welcoming environment for pupils who are unwell, and form an important part of the pastoral care structure. The qualified nurse maintains rigorous procedures to ensure high levels of care, including the use of a suitable medical room.
- 3.6 Pupils receive ample encouragement and opportunity to lead healthy lifestyles. Nutrition forms part of the curriculum and a variety of displays and initiatives reinforces the need for healthy eating and living. The 'Bike It' initiative, promoted by pupil monitors, and exemplified by staff, has encouraged some sixty children to cycle to school daily. Health and well-being leaflets in reception are readily available for parents, and colourful healthy eating displays in both the Upper and Lower School provide reminders and reinforcement for all pupils. Pupils enjoy nutritious meals prepared on site and served in the bright, spacious dining room. To protect pupils with allergies, the school is designated as a nut free zone, there is a display of children's care plans in the dining room and those with allergies have

individual place mats with reminders of their dietary restrictions. PE is well represented in the timetable and in a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. There is ample outdoor play space so pupils are able to exercise socially, and children in the EYFS have their own outdoor activity area.

- 3.7 A clear and detailed anti-bullying policy operates and is widely publicised on notice boards and handbooks. Incidents of bullying are very rare. The school has appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with issues of child protection should they arise. The deputy head, who is the child protection officer, ensures that staff receive regular training. Staff undergo all of the necessary checks prior to their appointment.
- 3.8 Very effective measures ensure the health and safety of pupils. The Health and Safety Committee, comprising the chair of the School Council, senior management team (SMT) members and senior staff, meets termly and all staff have the opportunity to table issues for consideration. A health and safety consultant has been retained and provides valuable expertise and advice. Risk assessments are thorough and are reviewed regularly. Fire drills take place termly, records are kept and any issues addressed promptly. Fire and health and safety notices appear around the school and in handbooks, and provide important reminders of routines and expectations. Admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained. The school has prepared an accessibility plan and has regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 3.9 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.10 The school has introduced many new initiatives since the last inspection to build on the strength of its links with parents and the community, and these are now outstanding. The school works in partnership with parents to provide a challenging yet safe and secure environment in which pupils can develop their creativity, independence and sense of enquiry, in line with its aims.
- 3.11 A high proportion of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the quality of education provided by the school. Singled out for particular praise were the breadth and balance of the curriculum offered, the promotion of positive attitudes and values, and the tangible warmth of the care and guidance given to the individual pupil.
- 3.12 A small number of parents expressed concern about the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the view of the inspection team, the processes and structures now in place for helping pupils with specific needs are much improved since the last inspection and provide a good level of support throughout the school, including that available in the EYFS.
- 3.13 Parents of pupils of all ages are given many worthwhile opportunities to be involved in activities in the school and in the work and progress of their children. Parent helpers throughout the school add value by sharing their time and expertise with pupils in many ways. The contribution those from different cultures can make is valued at all levels. The parent teacher association (PTA) is a strength of the school, contributing much to social links between parents, organising a wide range of activities and raising a considerable amount of money for charity as well as supporting the school. In discussion with representatives of the PTA, very strong support was expressed for the school and the staff. A positive example of this is the support given to staff to undertake activities of benefit to the whole school

- community. The parents feel that they “have a voice” and many travel considerable distances to the school because of its ethos and open culture.
- 3.14 Abundant information is available about all that happens in school, and a wide range of opportunities exist for parents to discuss pupils’ progress with teachers. Information can be found in a variety of ways which include the up-to-date website, weekly newsletters and large plasma screen in the school entrance hall. Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with excellent information booklets about the school. These include useful details about the curriculum and how the school operates.
- 3.15 Regular parents’ evenings take place, at which targets are discussed and teachers are easily accessible if parents want to make informal contact. The headmaster and members of the senior management team are outside in the school grounds at the beginning and end of the school day to meet parents. Information evenings on various subjects take place each term. Parents receive informative written reports about their children’s achievement and progress. These reports include clear targets for future improvement and an opportunity for parents to respond to the contents and suggest appropriate action.
- 3.16 The school’s open ethos ensures that parental concerns are taken seriously and are handled with appropriate care. The complaints procedure is available to all parents but no formal complaints have been made.
- 3.17 The school has made great progress in developing its links with the wider community at home and abroad since the last inspection and seek to strengthen them even further. Pupils regularly visit places of interest in and around the area, and visits from services such as the police support and enrich the curriculum. Pupils of all ages in the school have been involved in the community through such projects as donating produce to a shelter for the homeless, supporting Battersea Dogs Home, involvement in the Black History Festival, singing carols for the elderly and supporting the Royal British Legion. Links with the wider world have been developed through supporting the Water Aid project and the ‘Love in a Box’ initiative, where a variety of useful new gifts are packed into a shoebox to be sent to a child in a needy area of the world. Through working towards the Eco School Award, the school is hoping to be paired with a French-speaking school and intends to introduce exchanges where possible. Useful links with American and Chinese educational establishments are also taking place.
- 3.18 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 The proprietor, advised by the School Council, provides outstanding care for the school and its development, and offers extremely good support in fulfilling the school's aims. Since the last inspection, the quality of governance has continued to improve. The commitment of the family trust, which owns the school, and that of the School Council, functioning in an advisory capacity as a governing body, is recognised in the many recent building developments in the school.
- 4.2 The School Council, made up of experienced educationalists, meets termly. The School Executive Committee, a sub-committee of the School Council, also meet termly, and provides a mechanism for support and a forum for discussion with the headmaster on policy matters. Members of the School Council and the School Executive Committee are all involved in strategic discussions leading towards decision making. The headmaster is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. The proprietor, as the chairman of council, is ultimately responsible for policy decisions. The chairman of council is fully aware of his responsibilities including health and safety, discharging these effectively. He is committed to investment in resources, ensuring that the most effective provision is made for the educational needs of the school. The chairman, the School Council, the headmaster and the SMT have compiled a school development plan with a clear vision for the future of the school.
- 4.3 The proprietor, as chairman of council, has an office in school, and meets weekly with the headmaster, and the administration and finance staff. He is always available to attend SMT meetings, and meetings of the PTA, thus being fully familiar with all aspects of school life. In this way, the proprietor has an extremely effective oversight of the school, particularly through the close contact maintained between himself and the headmaster, and is well informed of the school's successes and achievements in all subjects and activities.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.4 Caring and visible leadership provides a clear educational direction for the school, ensuring that all its aims are fulfilled well. The school is effectively led and managed. In response to the last inspection, time has been allocated to enable heads of department and subject coordinators to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning in their departments. There is overlap in the roles and responsibilities of those in leadership positions; the school is aware of this and is considering the issue. Leadership and management in the EYFS are outstanding.
- 4.5 Staff meetings are held weekly, with pupils' welfare high on the agenda. In addition to this, weekly meetings are held by the SMT and heads of department. Through these regular meetings, all members of staff are kept fully informed about school matters, and policies and procedures are reviewed at regular intervals. In-service training is regular and thorough, and professional development is of a high priority. The school development plan is a working document for the school and the governors and it is fully representative of what the school is aiming to achieve in the future. Heads of department have produced informative handbooks and are very well organised regarding their resources, which are plentiful and up-to-date.
- 4.6 Across the school, staffing levels are generous and enable strong support to be given to pupils at all levels. The staff are of a high quality, and the procedures for appointing and

deploying them are managed effectively and supported by appropriate documentation. The required checks, including those with the Criminal Records Bureau, are made on all staff before an appointment is confirmed, and proper records are kept. A very good system of induction operates for new members of staff and newly qualified teachers, who feel welcome and supported. All staff are appraised annually as part of the staff and school development process.

- 4.7 Financial control and planning are outstanding. Provision of resources in the school fully supports teaching and learning and the needs of all pupils. The accommodation and grounds are maintained to an extremely high standard and are immaculate. The administrative and support staff undertake their roles very efficiently.
- 4.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.9 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Overall Conclusions**

- 5.1 Outstanding governance and the strong leadership of the headmaster, together with a committed and dedicated team of senior colleagues, ensure the school fully meets its aims. However, there is some overlap in the responsibilities of the SMT. The provision in the EYFS is effective in meeting the needs of children. Pupils throughout the school achieve good and frequently outstanding standards in their academic work and in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Highly effective systems are in place to support pupils in their learning, but assessment and marking are inconsistent. Pupils of all ages are well motivated and approach school life with enjoyment, although the presentation of their work is not always neat. Their personal development is outstanding and they become articulate, thoughtful and confident. Excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves. Staff provide a supportive atmosphere in which pastoral care is outstanding and pupils feel respected and valued. Parents are extremely satisfied with the education provided and pupils are appreciative of the opportunities which are available to them. Governors and senior staff are aware of the points for development.
- 5.2 The school has made good progress since the last inspection and the two recommendations have been met: to enable heads of department and curriculum leaders to monitor and evaluate teaching; and to identify in daily planning, and provide in lessons, more tasks to meet the individual needs of all pupils.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.4 In order for the school to improve further it should:
1. review the management structure and roles to avoid overlap of responsibilities;
  2. strengthen the consistency and approach to assessment, including marking, throughout the school;
  3. devise and implement a policy to raise standards of presentation of work and to ensure its consistency across all age groups.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

## 6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008 by one inspector. The inspector observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspector examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

### List of Inspectors

Mrs Karin Kelly	Reporting Inspector
Mr Paul Baker	Former Head of Department, IAPS school
Mr Dominic Crehan	Headmaster, IAPS school
Mr Giles Delaney	Headmaster, IAPS school
Ms Diane Gardiner	Head of Pre-Preparatory School, IAPS school
Mrs Susan Walker	Head of Preparatory School, GSA school
Mrs Bridget Windley	Headmistress, IAPS school
Mrs Elisabeth Mimpriss	Early Years Lead Inspector

## **7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)**

- 7.1 The EYFS setting has 125 children on roll, who are admitted from the age of 3. Priority for admission is given to those with siblings in the school, and others are assessed for suitability for the education offered. All children in the Nursery attend every morning; their parents then choose whether they should stay for lunch or for the afternoon sessions. A number of children are full-time from the outset and others increase their attendance during the year. Those in Reception attend full-time. The main aim is to inspire children to be adventurous and committed in their learning, by providing them with a wide range of exciting and interesting activities. Specialist teaching in ballet, PE and music from the Nursery, and French from Reception, augments the range of children's experiences.
- 7.2 Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Parents appreciate the high level of care offered by staff, and they feel involved and well informed. Comprehensive arrangements are made to ensure that each child is fully supported and they make good progress. The Resource Unit establishes individual programmes for children with English as an additional language or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Very good links have been forged with external specialists such as speech therapists. A high level of challenge is provided for the many able children. Arrangements for children's welfare and health and safety are outstanding. Planning for future improvement is excellent.
- 7.3 Children's achievement is good. They settle quickly to their tasks and persevere. They are articulate and make a particularly strong start to independent writing, with even the youngest children confident to attempt words of which they are unsure. They acquire good numeracy skills, and can apply these in varied contexts. Children make natural use of information and communication technology. They are creative and curious, and experiment with a wide variety of media and tools. This good progress ensures that children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.
- 7.4 The provision for children's personal development and well-being is outstanding. From the outset, children choose their own snack at break time and adopt hygienic practices. Their physical development is very well considered. 'Golden rules' which stress consideration and care for others are constantly reinforced and exemplified by staff. Children respect each other and are helpful and kind. Relationships at all levels are excellent. Children have good opportunities to explore the world around them, and lay a strong foundation for the future.
- 7.5 Staff offer good support for children's learning and development. Regular observations and discussions enable them to identify difficulties at an early stage and arrange any necessary support. Classrooms are well organised to permit a wide range of activities and suitable opportunities are made for outside play, although this is limited by the space available. Children enjoy using the adventure playground. Very good use is made of the excellent specialist facilities, such as the gymnasium, hall and dance studios.
- 7.6 Arrangements for the promotion of children's welfare are outstanding. Great care is taken to ensure their safety and a full-time nurse, supported by a part-time first aid assistant, is at hand to look after any child who is unwell. Adults model the good habits and behaviour which are demonstrated by the children. The high standard of the learning environment enhances pupils' welfare.
- 7.7 The leadership and management of the setting are excellent. Records, policies and procedures are kept meticulously and are reviewed at least annually. All necessary checks have been made for adults who care or have access to the children and the staff are well

qualified for their roles. Risk assessments are thorough. Resources are usefully deployed and well considered. Children from a range of different backgrounds and faiths feel valued and included. The outstanding self-evaluation conducted by the senior management team demonstrates their determination to provide care and education of high quality. Parents are delighted with the start their children make in the EYFS and are most appreciative of the caring approach of the staff. Excellent systems of monitoring and observation have been established and the practical and well-focused development plans, which include well-targeted training, are based on detailed departmental reviews. The school has improved opportunities for outdoor play and activities, as recommended in the previous report, although it recognises that this provision is not yet sufficient.

### **What the Setting Should Do to Improve**

- 7.8 In order to enhance the already good standards, the setting should:
1. improve the arrangements for outside play during class time.
- 7.9 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.