



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BEAUDESERT PARK SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Beaudesert Park School

Full Name of School	Beaudesert Park School		
DfE Number	916/6015		
Registered Charity Number	311711		
Address	Beaudesert Park School Minchinhampton Stroud Gloucestershire GL6 9AF		
Telephone Number	01453 832072		
Fax Number	01453 836040		
Email Address	head@beaudesert.gloucs.sch.uk		
Headmaster	Mr James Womersley		
Chair of Governors	Mr Roger Trafford		
Age Range	4 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	357		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (176 boys; 181 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	34	5-11: 235
	11-13:	88	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	351	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 78
Number of Boarders	Total:	6	
	Full:	0	Weekly: 6
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011		
	16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (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 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 November 2007 and can be found at 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.

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
The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(a)	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
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
(c) The quality of boarding education	8
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management	10
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	11
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	13
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	15

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Beaudesert Park School is a day and boarding preparatory school for 357 boys and girls aged from 4 to 13, set in a large estate in Minchinhampton, near Stroud in Gloucestershire. There are 34 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Prep School comprises Years 3 to 8 and the Pre-prep caters for pupils from the EYFS to Year 2. Most pupils who board do so on a flexible arrangement for a few nights, but six pupils board weekly. There are no full boarders. The school is an Anglican foundation with charitable status, overseen by a board of governors. It was founded in 1908 in Warwickshire and moved to its present premises in 1918. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made to the accommodation for boarders.
- 1.2 The school takes its pupils from the surrounding, mostly rural, area. Most come from farming, professional and business families. The majority of pupils are from a white British background. Standardised test results indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average. At present, 59 pupils receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly for dyslexia and dyspraxia. No pupils require help with English as an additional language, and none has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.3 Beaudesert Park aims to offer a high achieving, academically aspiring education, coupled with a flexible approach to after-school care and boarding. It sets out to maintain a happy family atmosphere that upholds traditional standards. The school seeks to sustain a purposeful, nurturing and supportive environment so that by the time pupils leave they have gained not only an outstanding and all-encompassing education, but also confidence, friendships and memories to last a lifetime.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The pupils' achievement and their learning, attitudes and skills are excellent. Pupils learn many new skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy, which they apply successfully across the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and their behaviour is consistently outstanding. The excellent curriculum covers all the requisite areas and provides additional experiences, particularly in languages. A wide and appropriate range of clubs and activities is available to all pupils and many achieve excellent standards in sports and the arts. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers form excellent relationships with their pupils, who come into lessons ready, enthusiastic and eager to work. Some lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop skills of independent learning, but overall, opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or to work independently are infrequent. The school is developing good modes of assessment, which are used well to track the pupils' progress. Pupils with SEND are well provided for in their individual lessons, are very well supported in class and make excellent progress.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. They develop into confident and responsible people, able to talk and communicate with their peers and with adults. They show mature and sensitive understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters. The outstanding arrangements for the welfare of pupils, including the excellent arrangements for boarding, make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- 2.3 The school is governed well; the governors provide effective oversight and discharge their responsibilities effectively. The quality of leadership and management is good and senior managers set a clear educational direction for the school's work, particularly for the pupils' care and welfare. Lessons and the pupils' work are monitored mostly by middle managers; senior managers identify areas for improvement through mostly informal methods. The headmaster and the staff in the Pre-prep are appraised regularly but in the Prep School, regular appraisal of staff is not yet established. The school development plan is of good quality, but omits provision for the professional development of staff. The school has excellent links with parents. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A small minority thought that there are insufficient opportunities for them to be involved in the life of the school. Inspectors do not agree and found that parents have numerous opportunities to be involved. All recommendations from the previous report have been implemented.

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. Establish frequent and regular appraisal for all staff in the school, including monitoring of teaching, and use this to plan effectively for their professional development.
 2. Across all teaching and subject areas, extend the best practice of giving pupils opportunities to think for themselves and to work independently.
 3. In the EYFS, implement plans to further develop outdoor learning for children in the Reception classes.

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 pupils' overall achievement and their learning, attitudes and skills are excellent across all ages and abilities. In their time at the school, pupils increase in knowledge and understanding in their subjects and learn many new skills, which they apply successfully in all subjects. Pupils read because they want to and their literacy skills are a strong feature of their success in learning across the curriculum. They read intelligently and write fluently for a variety of purposes and audiences. Story telling and poetry are often highly imaginative. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are frequently of high quality for their ages. Oracy skills are strong when pupils enter Year 1. The school works hard to encourage and support pupils to speak to large audiences, for example in assembly, and from a young age, pupils do so with good levels of articulacy and confidence.
- 3.2 Number skills are very strong and pupils successfully apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. Mental arithmetic skills are well developed. Graphs and the recording of data are used confidently in many areas and older pupils solve highly complex mathematical problems. Good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are evident, particularly in English and design technology (DT), as well as in ICT lessons. Pupils work effectively in science and develop good investigative skills. They understand how to set up fair tests.
- 3.3 Pupils attain excellent standards in many extra-curricular activities. This is most notably evident in sports and in the arts. The school celebrates a number of achievements in sports by individuals and groups, including champions and medallists in national competitions, notably in cross-country running, athletics and swimming. Pupils regularly achieve places in county hockey and cricket teams. Pupils recently achieved much success in the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts in both drama and music. Outstanding examples of pupils' art and design technology are displayed throughout the school, for example the work on view in the art room by pupils in an extension class working in charcoal on portraiture. Many pupils play musical instruments and have gained much success in instrumental examinations. Singing in the school is of a very high standard, and the choir performs regularly to parents and in the community. It recently performed at Worcester Cathedral.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national norm but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be above national age-related expectations. Pupils attain well in all curriculum areas. In accordance with its aims, the school gives focus to Common Entrance tests and pupils perform particularly well in these areas. The school has a good record of success for pupils gaining entry to senior schools, with a good proportion achieving scholarships to selective schools. This attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Those with SEND make good, and sometimes excellent, progress in their lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In standardised reading tests, the pupils' achievements are far above age-related expectations. More able pupils and those who are gifted and talented are consistently challenged in their lessons and make excellent progress.
- 3.5 A strong factor in the good progress of pupils is the extremely positive attitudes that they bring to their learning. Behaviour is consistently outstanding. Pupils are

enthusiastic learners; they come to lessons expecting to learn, concentrate fully throughout, respond to questions with eagerness and work hard in most lessons. They reflect carefully on discussions taking place and give thoughtful and mature responses. Homework is completed punctiliously, often exceeding the volume expected, and the work is well presented.

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

- 3.6 The school's curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. It supports the aim of preparing pupils for a rapidly changing world and the many challenges ahead. The curriculum gives them experiences in all the requisite areas of learning. Pupils also learn French from Reception, Spanish from Year 5, Latin from Year 6 and classical civilisation in Year 7. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been strengthened further by the introduction of a very successful outdoor learning programme that starts in the Pre-prep and includes ecological studies in Year 5. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme has been redesigned to support pupils' personal development more effectively and fulfils this aim well. In addition, ICT is now more widely used across the curriculum, particularly in DT and English.
- 3.7 Sport and the performing arts are strong. In addition, the science and engineering week for the whole school, a recent Mexican day for Year 2, an Indian day for Year 1, a European languages day and World Book Day add considerably to the pupils' learning. Visits to local sites, theatres and events, as well as involvement in national and local competitions such as a junior mathematics challenge and a wildlife nature quiz, provide further enhancement of the curriculum. Residential trips for older pupils help to develop their independence. Lectures by staff and visiting speakers raise the pupils' awareness of the world beyond school, and study skills sessions help to enhance pupils' preparation for Common Entrance. Annual debates make use of the pupils' excellent speaking and listening skills, and help to develop their confidence further.
- 3.8 The curriculum is planned to ensure that it is suitable for all ages, and all pupils progress as they move through the school. The provision for those with SEND is excellent. Pupils are assessed in Reception and the school effectively tailors extra help for them, compiling individual education plans. The school identifies pupils who are gifted and talented, and ensures that they are extended appropriately within the classroom and during extra-curricular activities.
- 3.9 An extremely wide range of clubs is available to all pupils. These include Brownies, golf, gardening, rowing, polo, horse riding and many others. The Beaudesert Badge programme, for those in Years 4 to 6, greatly enriches the educational experience of the pupils and helps to develop their sense of teamwork and responsibility. They select from a wide range of activities, including first aid, wiring plugs and survival skills. As a result, the pupils are prepared to take on new challenges.
- 3.10 The pupils benefit from close links within the local community. They visit a local school for children with disabilities, and the choir sings in the local church as well as the cathedral. The pupils' horizons are extended, and their understanding of the needs of others are enhanced through their links to a school in Tanzania and their charity collections to support a number of national and international causes.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The quality of teaching is good and some is excellent. It promotes the pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school well.
- 3.12 Teaching is confident and demonstrates secure knowledge of individual subjects. The planning of content and the strategy of lessons is thorough, and lessons have clear aims. Teachers form excellent relationships with their pupils, which promote outstanding behaviour at all times. Pupils come into lessons ready, enthusiastic and eager to work, and they maintain those attitudes throughout the day.
- 3.13 Most lessons are very well paced and pupils enjoy the activities and challenges provided for them. Many teachers invent simple games that challenge pupils and quickly move learning forward. Overall, teachers use methods that engage the pupils' interests and help them to remain focused throughout.
- 3.14 Questioning is often challenging and moves at a good pace, but questions that are open ended and require pupils to use their imaginations are less frequent than those that require factual answers. The most successful teaching provides good opportunities for pupils to develop skills of independent learning, but in some cases opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or to work independently are infrequent.
- 3.15 The school is very well equipped with learning resources that are well organised and used very effectively. In particular, since the last inspection, the school has installed interactive whiteboards in many classrooms and staff use these to great effect to ensure that lessons are interesting and well paced.
- 3.16 Teaching has benefited from hard work to improve modes of assessment. Tests provide good information about the pupils' achievements in some detail, which is used well to plan the next stage of learning, and to ensure that no pupil is left behind and the most able are fully and gainfully occupied and challenged. The school's staff and management are well informed about the progress, strengths and weaknesses of each pupil's learning. This knowledge is used well to track pupils' progress. Pupils with SEND are well provided for in their individual lessons and are very well supported on an individual basis in class. Consequently, they come to lessons with positive attitudes and an eagerness to learn, similar to the attitudes of their peers.
- 3.17 In some subjects, teachers regularly set targets for their pupils at the front of their exercise books. Marking is generally good, but not consistently so. At its best, it is thorough and comprehensive, and gives good advice for future development.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. From an early age they begin to develop into mature and responsible people, able to talk and communicate with their peers and with adults.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They think, talk and write about a world beyond the tangible, and make good use of opportunities in assemblies and other places to give small dramatic presentations to illustrate a moral purpose. They join in discussions in English and in religious education (RE) that concern issues of deeper meaning and they write poetry and stories about their feelings and beliefs. In assemblies, they sing hymns with enthusiasm and join in prayers.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They know the difference between right and wrong, and they have a firm understanding of the school code of conduct, which they adhere to with purpose. In RE and PSHE lessons they discuss moral issues with seriousness and concern, showing a depth of understanding and belief. For example, Year 7 pupils engaged in a mature discussion in an RE lesson about the themes of sacrifice, faith and obedience in the Old Testament. Charitable giving is a strong feature of the school and pupils were clearly moved by a film shown in an assembly which reported on their own charitable support of children in need around the world.
- 4.4 The pupils' excellent social development is characterised by the way they relate extremely well to each other. The school is a civilised place, where pupils interact in peace and harmony with each other. Pupils contribute responsibly to the life of the school by making positive and valued contributions as members of the school council. Older pupils take responsibility as sports captains and assembly monitors. Pupils are well behaved and courteous, holding doors and gates open and greeting adults with openness. As a result of their work in PSHE and other lessons, pupils have good understanding of local and national institutions, and the way that society works.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They have good opportunities to develop an awareness of Western European culture in English, history and the arts. They visit concerts, the theatre, museums and exhibitions, and they discuss films that they see in school. In RE, they discuss their own religions and cultures, as well as others from around the world. They also visit different places of worship. In PSHE, pupils discuss living in a multi-cultural world. In addition, pupils extend their knowledge of children from other cultures in assemblies, often with a focus on Africa. The school also has a partnership with a school in Tanzania.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding and fully accord with the aims of the school. They support the pupils' personal development highly effectively. Systems for guidance on pupils' behaviour and pastoral care are fully established and are very effective. Relationships amongst pupils, and between adults and pupils, are particularly strong at all ages. Staff meet weekly to discuss the pastoral needs of pupils. These meetings are highly informative and helpful; staff have an excellent understanding of such needs and of pupils' backgrounds, and they take effective action to support them when appropriate.
- 4.7 The need for good behaviour is reinforced on a regular basis by staff, and pupils carry a good behaviour guide as an additional reminder of the expectations of the school. Reward systems are understood and implemented well, with a series of 'credit' and 'plus' points being issued on a daily basis. Pupils who accrue more than ten credits are commended in assembly, receiving a certificate. The pupils enjoy this accolade, which visibly strengthens the pastoral care arrangements.
- 4.8 The school has recently revised its bullying policy, and this provides effective measures to deal with any bullying should it arise. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents commented that the school deals with any occurrence of bullying and expressed no concerns. Procedures for the protection of pupils are led effectively by the child protection officer who undertakes appropriately regular training to ensure that the safeguarding of all pupils remains a high priority within the school. All staff are appropriately trained in this area. Appointment procedures are thorough.
- 4.9 Appropriate procedures are in place to guard against fire, and regular practices are held both during the school day and during the time boarders spend in their own accommodation. Potential health and safety risks are dealt with effectively and covered by comprehensive risk assessments for all pupils, as are trips away from the school. The school has an appropriate plan to improve educational access to the curriculum for those with SEND. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and carefully stored electronically.
- 4.10 The school's medical team provides comprehensive care for all pupils in the school, with detailed records and secure arrangements for the safe storage of medicines. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and they make considered choices in the dining room. Pupils acknowledge the value of exercise.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.11 The quality of boarding education is outstanding and fully meets the school's aims. The boarding experience plays a valuable part in the pupils' education and personal development, and contributes effectively to the aims of the school. All the recommendations from the previous boarding inspection, undertaken by Ofsted, have been implemented.
- 4.12 The school offers a number of boarding options to suit both pupils and parents. Flexi-boarders can choose to stay between one and four nights or pupils can stay as weekly boarders. No boarders sleep over at the weekends.
- 4.13 Relationships within boarding are very positive. The boarders show sensitivity and camaraderie towards each other and they talk easily with adults. Pupils speak about

being very happy with the provision made for them and their relationships with boarding staff. The care of the boarders is overseen by a team of house staff who share the various duties.

- 4.14 The accommodation for boarders is appropriate for their ages and caters very well for their safety, comfort, hygiene and recreational needs. The boarding house has an adequate number of bathroom and toilet facilities, spaced evenly throughout the accommodation. Dormitories vary in size but are uniformly comfortable and of good quality. A rolling programme of redecoration is in progress. Pupils can personalise their own sleeping space should they choose to, which helps to create a sense of belonging and a homely feel to each dormitory. The boarders have 24-hour access to a dedicated team of medical staff, who are very caring in their approach. Pupils know who is on duty and understand how to summon staff at night if necessary.
- 4.15 A good number of recreational facilities are available for the boarders. Frequent use is made of the extensive facilities offered by the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the school's beautiful grounds and the enjoyment these bring. Pupils enjoy numerous activities organised for them throughout the week, including the Beaundesert Badge.
- 4.16 Pupils appreciate the boarding experience because it gives them more time to spend with their friends, as well as providing an environment in which they can do their prep without distraction. They value the opportunity of being able to ask staff for help should they need it. Telephones are available and pupils are able to make contact with home, in private, should they wish. Pupils say that they learn social skills and independence through boarding. They are highly satisfied with their boarding experience and enthusiastic in recommending it to others.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is excellent. The governors provide effective oversight of the school, in line with its aims, and discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and staffing. A high level of expertise amongst the governors, both in education and other professions, strongly supports their work. In addition, many of the governors attend training courses for school governors. Governors meet regularly, both as a full governing body and in smaller committees that cover academic, oversight and financial matters.
- 5.2 Much of the work of the governing body is concerned with the school's accommodation. Governors have a clear plan about action to take, and strategies for achieving improvement. At present, governors are working to improve provision for the EYFS, and towards the introduction of a Nursery.
- 5.3 Governors have good insight into the workings of the school. They receive regular reports from the headmaster, and other staff report to them from time to time on their own specific responsibilities. Many governors are regular visitors to the school and maintain contact with daily events. A number of the governors are parents of former pupils. Governors are effective in their oversight of the arrangements for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. A nominated governor checks the effectiveness of the school's child protection procedures annually, as required. All recommendations for improvement made at the previous inspection have been implemented.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is good, with managers at all levels providing effective leadership in accordance with the aims of the school. Senior managers provide support, challenge and stimulus for the staff and pupils. Policies set an effective framework for the school's work and for moving forward. Heads of department produce policies for their departments and monitor their delivery.
- 5.5 The school works to a clear educational direction set out by senior management. Pupils achieve extremely well within a rich curriculum and bring an enthusiasm and eagerness to their learning. Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils which are implemented and monitored by the senior managers are of outstanding quality and support pupils' excellent personal development.
- 5.6 Managers are effective in evaluating the work of the school, mostly through informal methods, such as frequent dialogue and discussion. Heads of department monitor the work of their departments, including lessons, and teachers observe each other's teaching. The pupils' books are monitored frequently. Senior staff regularly shadow individual pupils for a day. Senior managers do not monitor teaching regularly, except in the Pre-prep, where monitoring is firmly established. The headmaster is appraised routinely and staff in the Pre-prep are appraised biannually, but regular appraisal of staff in the Prep School is not yet established.
- 5.7 The school development plan is of good quality and covers most areas for taking the school forward. It includes priorities and timescales, and costs are estimated. It does not, however, contain a whole-school strategy for the professional

development of teaching staff. Occasional training days are organised; for example, a day on the teaching of pupils with dyslexia has been arranged to take place in the near future. There is not yet, however, a structure for using material from the monitoring of lessons, assessment and other information to inform an ongoing strategy to improve the quality of teaching.

- 5.8 The school is very successful in recruiting and motivating good quality staff. It is conscientious in its appointment procedures and in carrying out the necessary safeguarding checks on staff, volunteers and governors. Senior managers work successfully with staff to create a unified team that exercises the shared goal of a positive and caring approach towards each individual pupil, which has contributed to pupils' outstanding attitudes towards learning.
- 5.9 The school is very well supported by its administrative and domestic staff. All areas for improvement raised in the previous report have been successfully addressed.

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

- 5.10 The school has excellent links with parents, which have been strengthened significantly since the previous inspection.
- 5.11 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that the majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about and supportive of the school. They commented most favourably on the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities offered, pastoral guidance, the promotion of good behaviour, the information available and the fact that they can communicate easily with the school. Some parents felt that there are insufficient opportunities for them to be involved in the life of the school. Inspection findings do not support this view. Parents have numerous opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. The school holds coffee mornings and drinks parties for parents during the year. Parents come to watch matches, join parents' cricket and hockey teams, observe lessons such as ballet and judo, and attend play performances and school concerts. They contributed to the 'Dragons' Den' competition and come in to speak about their occupations.
- 5.12 Parents attend meetings on topics such as internet safety and parenting matters. In addition, the school organises a programme of speakers for parents. Parents are consulted regularly: this has led to extended provision of after-school care, as well as recognition of a need to provide greater support for parents new to the school. The committed parents' organisation makes a valuable contribution to the school by organising a variety of social and fund-raising events.
- 5.13 Information for parents about their children's work and progress is comprehensive: parents' evenings and meetings on a variety of subjects are regularly held. Regular and thorough feedback on pupils' achievement and progress is provided. Reports are detailed and comprehensive, and contain targets to help pupils improve.
- 5.14 An effective website provides regular communication with the school. Parents also receive detailed handbooks, a well-produced school magazine and termly calendars. Regular newsletters are an effective means of communication. Electronic screens throughout the school keep parents and pupils well informed of forthcoming events. Parents and staff use email to communicate with each other.
- 5.15 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. In questionnaire responses, they indicated that concerns are handled well by the school.

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. Children thrive and make rapid progress in a safe learning environment. A well-balanced focus on their welfare and learning, and excellent partnerships with parents and others, ensure that each child's needs are fully met. There is a strong capacity for continuous improvement, reflected in effective changes implemented since the previous inspection, in plans to develop outdoor play areas and to open a Nursery next year.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Policies, risk assessment and staff checks are implemented efficiently to ensure that all children are safeguarded. Strong practice gives children an equal chance to succeed and reflects the staff's commitment to inclusion. Very good teamwork amongst the staff ensures consistent planning across the two Reception classes, enabling the smooth transition of children into school from a variety of nurseries and, subsequently, into Year 1. Staff and resources are deployed very effectively to support all aspects of the children's learning, enhanced by rigorous, regular monitoring and evaluation. Parents are highly satisfied with the provision: their views are listened to and acted upon, and they are actively involved in their children's learning.

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

6.3 Provision is good, with many outstanding features. Enthusiastic, knowledgeable staff significantly contribute towards the children's excellent progress. They provide a broad range of absorbing activities, giving high priority to teaching basic skills, and clearly engage the children. Classrooms are bright, with attractive displays of the children's work and good quality resources that are well organised to promote choice and independence. Good use is made of the extensive school grounds to develop the children's physical skills and appreciation of the natural world. The lack of immediate access to an outside play area constrains planned outdoor learning for the Reception classes, but plans are well advanced to remedy this in 2012. Staff guide children very well, establishing 'golden rules' and clear health and safety routines. They monitor the children's progress through regular observation and assessment, and use the resulting information well to plan for children's differing needs.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children are outstanding. Their personal and social skills are highly developed. They behave very well, co-operate with one another and take responsibility for small tasks. Children show that they feel safe through their warm relationships with staff and confident exploration of their surroundings. They are enthusiastic learners who are likely to achieve or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. Children's communication, literacy and numeracy skills develop very well. They use their phonic knowledge to compose simple words and sentences, and their growing understanding of number and shape is evident as they sing rhymes and construct models. They sing very well, and demonstrate creativity and increasing knowledge of the world through imaginative play, artwork, language and outdoor exploration, which is intended to improve further with the new accommodation. Their physical skills develop well, and they enjoy the excellent opportunities for exercise and healthy eating.

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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr John Ayerst

Mrs Jane Crouch

Mr Adrian Hathaway

Ms Anne Culliford

Reporting Inspector

Headmistress, IAPS school

Head of Boarding, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector