



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**SHERRARDSWOOD SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Sherrardswood School

Full Name of School	<b>Sherrardswood School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>919/6047</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY297342</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>311070</b>		
Address	<b>Sherrardswood School Lockleys Welwyn Hertfordshire AL6 0BJ</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01438 714 282</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01438 840 616</b>		
Email Address	<b>headpa@sherrardswood.herts.sch.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mrs Lynda Corry</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Justin Phillips</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>341</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (185 boys; 156 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>3</b>	5-11: <b>130</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>47</b>	11-18: <b>159</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>341</b>	
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>18 Jan 2011 to 19 Jan 2011</b>		
	<b>16 Feb 2011 to 18 Feb 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 February 2007. The early years' provision was inspected by Ofsted in January 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 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 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
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The quality of governance	9
(b) The quality of leadership and management	10
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>12</b>
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>14</b>

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Sherrardswood School is an independent day school for pupils from two to eighteen years of age. It was founded in 1928 and is situated on the northern edge of Welwyn Garden City, and draws its pupils from the city and neighbouring Hertfordshire. It is located on a 25-acre site. The senior school is called Mimram House and is accommodated in purpose-built accommodation, and the junior school is located in Lockleys House, a grade two listed, Queen Anne manor house and associated buildings. The school is overseen by a governing body supported by several committees. Since the previous inspection there have been several changes in the senior leadership team and governing body.
- 1.2 The school aims to enable each child to develop to their maximum potential, to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve. It aims to enable pupils to make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. Its core values are to help pupils to grow into self-assured adults who can manage their lives and make a valuable contribution to society. It aims to provide a secure but challenging environment and to ensure that teaching and learning are of the highest quality. It wants pupils to gain the knowledge and skills to extend themselves in mind, body and spirit.
- 1.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is attended by 50 children. The junior school for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is attended by 130 pupils and the senior school is attended by 141 pupils in Years 7 to 11, with 20 students in the sixth form. The school reflects the diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the area. Most of the pupils come from professional or business backgrounds.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the junior school is above the national average with a wide range of abilities represented. The ability profile of the senior school to GCSE is slightly above the national average, although with a fairly wide spread of abilities. The ability profile of the sixth form is slightly lower than in the senior school, being slightly below the national average with around half of students demonstrating ability which is below the national average. The school has identified 107 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and it provides learning support for 43 pupils; four pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN). The school has identified five pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), three of whom receive language support. Many of the junior school pupils proceed to the senior school and most senior school pupils continue with their education post-sixteen.
- 1.5 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 Good teaching and a broad curriculum enable pupils to achieve good all round standards. Good leadership and management ensure good educational outcomes. Pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Most pupils make good progress and those with LDD, SEN and/or EAL make excellent progress. The more able pupils achieve the high standards of which they are capable. Attainment is good in relation to pupils' abilities at the ages of eleven and sixteen and in line with their abilities at the age of eighteen.
- 2.2 Good pastoral care and guidance enable pupils to demonstrate good personal development. The school has taken steps to improve the contribution of the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) course to pupils' personal development. The school is a very friendly school where relationships are positive; behaviour is good and bullying is rare. The school is thorough in its attention to safeguarding and pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- 2.3 The overall quality of leadership and management is good and enables the school to achieve its aims. The school benefits from sound governance but monitoring arrangements are insufficiently thorough. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated that they are satisfied with the school; they are particularly pleased with the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views and with pupils' behaviour. They expressed satisfaction with their children's progress and the range of subjects and activities the school provides. The help and guidance provided were felt to be positive features. The concerns of some parents that insufficient opportunities are provided for them to be involved in the work of the school and that the school did not deal with their concerns were not substantiated by the inspection. The concerns of some regarding governance were not supported by inspection findings. Junior school pupils were very positive about the school in the pre-inspection pupils' questionnaire; senior school pupils were less positive but many of their concerns did not concur with inspection findings. The school has made progress in relation to the recommendations from the previous inspection: it has taken steps to protect pupils from the health and safety hazards associated with the river. In response to the recommendation to improve the senior school library, books were distributed to relevant departments and study spaces were provided. The school has moved the medical room to a more appropriate location and is in the process of improving these facilities further.

## **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 did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- ensure that if a previous criminal records bureau (CRB) check is accepted, the following details are kept: date of disclosure; who obtained it; level of disclosure; unique reference number [Part 4, paragraph 22(3)(d) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];
  - provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, having regard for regulation 5 of the School Premises Regulations [Part 5, paragraph 23(k) under Premises and accommodation].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified both of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.
- 2.6 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Further develop opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development in the senior school.
  2. Evaluate PSHCE schemes of work in the senior school to better reflect the school's aims and ethos.
  3. Improve governors' reviewing and monitoring arrangements.
  4. In the EYFS, implement the plan to relocate the Reception classroom to the ground floor to provide access to outside activities to enhance children's 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 Pupils' overall achievements are high and standards are good throughout the school. The school achieves its objectives to develop pupils' potential and enable their learning to be of the highest quality.

##### ***Junior School***

3.2 Pupils are highly literate; they are articulate and speak confidently to adults and to their peers. They are attentive listeners and absorb information readily. Most pupils read well. They use their good skills with number effectively where relevant in other subjects. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) capability is good. Pupils achieve good standards in a wide range of sports. Many learn musical instruments or participate in the choir and in plays. Pupils are successful in a mathematics challenge against local junior schools and participate in an annual arts day and in the local 'Festival of Words'.

3.3 Results in national tests at the age of eleven to 2008 were above the national average for maintained primary schools. Performance in science exceeded that in English and mathematics. Results in national tests at the age of eleven to 2008 were in line with pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress is similar to the norm for pupils of similar ability. Pupils with LDD, SEN and/or EAL make excellent progress and many pupils with LDD achieve or exceed national expectations in national tests at the age of eleven. Pupils identified as gifted and talented make good progress and achieve high standards.

3.4 Pupils enjoy learning and are often enthusiastic. Independent thinking is widely evident and pupils enjoy role play and working together. They concentrate and organise themselves effectively in practical activities.

##### ***Senior School***

3.5 Pupils display well-developed literacy skills. They write accurately for a wide range of purposes and they speak clearly. Attentive listening skills enable them to learn rapidly. Pupils read widely, but the absence of a library constrains them in this respect. They use their well-developed mathematical skills in other subjects. ICT skills are used effectively in ICT lessons and in some other lessons. Pupils are creative and demonstrate good independent learning skills. Good standards are achieved in competitive sport, particularly rugby, cross-country and netball where they perform successfully against similar schools. Good standards are achieved in graded instrumental music examinations and several ensembles, and the choir perform in public. Drama is popular and many pupils participate in school productions. They are successful in academic competitions, such as mathematics challenges. Sixth-form students undertake voluntary community service, such as reading support for younger pupils.

3.6 Pupils' performance at GCSE level has been above the national average for maintained schools. A-level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. Results at GCSE and A level are good in relation to pupils' ability, indicating that their progress to GCSE level is above the average for pupils of similar ability. Pupils' progress is good overall, and those with LDD, SEN and/or

EAL make excellent progress, and many achieve excellent results at GCSE level. Pupils identified as gifted and talented make good progress and achieve high standards; some take GCSEs early.

- 3.7 Pupils exhibit good and often outstanding learning skills. They are keen to learn and participate fully. They work effectively together and independently and show enjoyment in their work. They have well-developed reasoning skills and enjoy sharing ideas, particularly in discussion. They are diligent and persevere, even when the challenge is considerable.

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

- 3.8 The overall quality of the curriculum is good and largely in keeping with the school's aims.

#### ***Junior school***

- 3.9 There is considerable emphasis on pupils' linguistic and mathematical development, particularly in the earlier years. French begins in Reception and continues throughout the junior school. Topic work in Years 1 and 2, followed by separate humanities subjects, promotes human and social understanding effectively. Science lessons support pupils' scientific understanding, and technological understanding occurs through design and technology (DT) and ICT. Long-term and medium-term curriculum planning is very thorough. Educational visits contribute significantly to pupils' personal and physical development, particularly through adventurous activities. Visits to art galleries and museums give pupils considerable insight into their studies and curriculum enhancement week provides a wide range of additional activities for the whole school.

#### ***Senior School***

- 3.10 There are good opportunities for linguistic development through English and French, and German is introduced in Year 8. Spanish is an additional option in Year 9 and Italian is taught in Year 11. Scientific understanding is supported by an appropriate number of science lessons in Years 7 and 8 and separate physics, chemistry and biology begin in Year 9. Technological understanding is fostered through separate ICT lessons leading to a nationally recognised short course in Year 9 for all pupils with the option to proceed to an ICT course which is equivalent to two or three GCSEs in Year 11. DT and food technology are taught effectively in Years 7 and 8. Human and social understanding is fostered through separate history and geography lessons. The school is aware that opportunities for PSHCE are currently limited in Years 7 and 8 and has begun to address this. Provision for creative, aesthetic and physical development is good through a range of arts subjects, including textiles and graphic design which are offered in Years 10 and 11. Starting some GCSE courses in Year 9 has a beneficial impact on standards achieved. The sixth-form curriculum provides a good range of subjects, including beneficial links with a local sixth-form consortium for a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. Pupils' experiences are enhanced through numerous additional activities and a wide range of educational visits and visiting speakers. Careers education includes work experience in Year 10, Year 11 pupils are entered for the Certificate in Working Life and timetabled lessons are in place in the sixth form. These opportunities effectively support transition to the next stage of education or to work.

- 3.11 At all stages the curriculum is suited to pupils' ages, abilities and needs. Grouping arrangements in the junior school and setting in English, mathematics, science and languages in the senior school ensure that pupils are working at a suitable level of challenge. Provision for gifted and talented pupils as well as those with LDD, SEN and/or EAL is very comprehensive. Initially pupils' learning difficulties are carefully assessed, and thorough individual education plans provide a good basis for lesson planning. A generous level of support is provided either through withdrawal sessions or in-class support. The requirements of the statements of SEN are fully met. Those identified as gifted and talented are provided with extension activities in class and several master classes are provided.
- 3.12 Extra-curricular provision is good throughout the school. Sport is widely represented with many opportunities for pupils to participate or to play competitively either in inter-house sports or against other schools. Activities in art, music and drama provide good opportunities for creativity and interest activities include film, board games, chess, physics club and, in the junior school, gardening. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has recently been introduced.

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

- 3.13 Throughout the school the quality of teaching is good and many of the lessons observed were excellent. The school is achieving its objective of providing teaching of the highest quality and is effective in promoting pupils' good progress.
- 3.14 Lessons are planned carefully, with clear objectives which are usually made explicit at the beginning of lessons. Where these are phrased in terms of what pupils should be able to do by the end of the lesson, rather than listing the activities they will do, pupils have a clear focus at which to aim. Varied sequences of activities, beginning with a 'starter' activity, prepare pupils for subsequent learning. A range of suitably chosen, varied activities, such as individual, pair or group work, engages pupils' interest. Teachers plan and provide a sequence of activities often at different levels of difficulty to support the full range of abilities; this engages all pupils and enables them to succeed. Expectations of all pupils are high and are usually met by the pupils. Teachers maintain close control of classes, monitoring overall performance and interjecting to guide the class as they work, and provide support and challenge for individual pupils. Individual support is highly regarded by the pupils. Most lessons proceed at a lively pace with clear, often short time allocations to specific tasks. Teachers display good subject knowledge and teach authoritatively, which gives pupils confidence; demonstrations are particularly convincing for pupils. Most lessons feature the use of suitable resources; interactive whiteboards are generally used beneficially to illustrate specific topics. Less successful lessons have shortcomings in time management that allow insufficient opportunities for pupils to be active.
- 3.15 Teachers provide plenty of spoken feedback. Marking, although generally of a satisfactory standard, ranges widely in quality from excellent, where it is informative, probing and developmental, to little more than a few words of commendation and a grade. Pupils appreciate and value more extended comments. Pupils' performance data are collected regularly and monitored in relation to standardised test data. Underachievement is identified and additional support is provided. Targets are set in target-setting days; these are helpful in giving pupils clear objectives at which to aim. Teachers use pupils' performance data effectively to inform their planning.

- 3.16 The quality of teaching provided for pupils with LDD, SEN and/or EAL is excellent. In-class support enables pupils to keep up and withdrawal teaching improves pupils' confidence and helps them to overcome any difficulties.

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

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

- 4.1 Junior school pupils show a good level of awareness in all areas, in keeping with the school aims for them to grow into self-assured adults. In the senior school, although sound, pupils' spiritual and moral development is less well developed and not fully in accord with the school's aims.
- 4.2 Pupils are self-confident and have well-developed personalities. They demonstrate self-esteem in achievement assemblies when they receive commendations for their work or contribution to school life. They are happy and co-operative and contribute positively to the school community. Self-knowledge is effectively encouraged in target setting where pupils review their own progress and identify achievable targets. They organise events confidently and raise funds for a range of charities. Pupils' spiritual development is widely evident in the junior school; pupils can talk knowledgeably about a range of faiths and are aware of the non-material aspects of life such as beauty. In both sections of the school religious festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year are included in assemblies, but in the senior school pupils' understanding of the spiritual dimensions of life is sometimes less secure.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral awareness is generally well developed. In the senior school their knowledge and understanding of topics such as the law and public institutions are relatively weak. They show understanding of moral questions in several subjects, for example in geography where they consider global issues such as sustainability and ecology. Pupils show an awareness of right and wrong and conform to school rules and generally behaviour is good. They show consideration for each other; the 'buddy' system is a particularly good example, where Year 11 and sixth form pupils help Year 7 pupils. They show concern for those less fortunate than themselves and raise considerable funds for charity. Pupils are sponsoring two children in Brazil and Kenya and the sixth form organise a charity week across the whole school.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is sound throughout the school. They enjoy exercising responsibility and undertake a range of responsibilities conscientiously. Pupils display co-operation, responsibility and personal commitment, particularly in sport and games. Older pupils organise activities for younger pupils, such as running a disco for Years 5, 6 and 7.
- 4.5 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate well-developed cultural awareness in the arts; many participate in school productions and music and art are strong. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different cultures; in the arts they study a range of cultures from around the world. In geography they show a good understanding of ways of life in different countries. Pupils show well-developed knowledge of the countries whose language they are learning in modern foreign languages. Trips abroad such as the Year 8 visit to Normandy provide pupils with a direct experience of foreign cultures.

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

- 4.6 Support and guidance are good throughout the school. The school achieves its aim to provide a secure environment for the pupils.
- 4.7 Form tutors know their pupils. In the senior school tutor groups consist of the whole year group; the larger groups have two tutors. This usually works effectively.

Regular pastoral meetings enable staff to discuss pupils' under-performance or other areas of concern. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are good. Younger pupils appreciate support from older pupils. Pupils say that they would go to their form tutor if they had a problem. Effective procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and as a result most pupils are well behaved. School rules are clear and rewards, such as house points, merits and commendations, motivate most of the pupils effectively. Sanctions are proportionate and incremental and fully understood by the pupils. Some pupils expressed concern that rewards and sanctions are inconsistently applied; this is not supported by inspection findings. Arrangements to guard against harassment and bullying are effective. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that if it does occur it will be swiftly and effectively dealt with. Pupils say that they feel safe. In their responses to the pupils' questionnaire some of the pupils felt that their concerns were not listened to; however, the school council is in place for this purpose and pupils' views are heeded. Some were concerned that their workload was not monitored; inspection findings are that tutors maintain an academic overview and this is the basis for discussion in pastoral team meetings. Target setting in Years 6 to 13, and mentoring in Years 11 to 13, are beneficial, particularly as pupils approach GCSE or A-level examinations. Careers advice and guidance are good; the programme includes contributions from a careers advisory service.

- 4.8 Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and effective. Child protection referrals are very thoroughly dealt with and relationships with the local authority are very good. Measures to reduce risks from fire and assure pupils' health and safety are effective. Provision for pupils who are ill, a recommendation from the previous inspection, is now adequate and in the process of being improved further. Records of accidents are thorough and a detailed record is kept of pupils' medical needs. The school has responded well to the previous inspection's recommendations regarding health and safety. All staff have received good quality child protection training as part of a three-year cycle from the local authority. The health and safety committee is vigilant; risk assessments are thorough and no hazards were observed during the inspection. The school successfully encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles; pupils are aware of dietary issues and numerous opportunities exist for them to participate in exercise. School lunches are of good quality. Admission and attendance registers are properly completed and stored. The school has a suitable disability access plan to improve access for those with disabilities.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound overall. The governing body ensures that the school is working towards its ambitious aims but the few shortcomings noted during the inspection indicate that its monitoring arrangements in some areas are not rigorous enough.
- 5.2 Several changes have taken place in the governing body since the last inspection and a new chair and vice chair of governors have been appointed. A good cross-section of useful experience is represented, such as financial, educational, estates, charities and human resources expertise. Suitable training has been attended and governors are fully apprised of their responsibilities. A nominated governor has responsibility for child protection and suitable training has been attended. The full governing body meets termly, and minutes show the main topic to be issues such as finance and pupil recruitment. Committees are in place for development and estates, finance, education, personnel, estates and awards, which report to the full governing body. Governors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection, and pupils' welfare, health and safety are overseen by the health and safety committee. However, the centralised register of staff appointments had not been sufficiently closely checked to ensure that all the required details were recorded at the time of the initial visit.
- 5.3 Governors attend events and informal visits take place from time to time, for example when governors sit in on lessons. They are always present at the appointment of senior staff and serve on disciplinary and appeals panels. The education committee receives a programme of presentations from heads of department. From time to time governors join subject staff meetings and serve on ad-hoc committees such as the ICT working party. The development committee has worked with the senior leadership team to progress the newly improved sixth form facility, dining room and additional science laboratory. Governors have reviewed how the school markets itself and have encouraged the development of a school website. The governing body is supportive and policies are updated and reviewed regularly. However, there were several omissions in the policies at the time of the initial visit, which indicates insufficiently regular and close review.

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

- 5.4 Leadership and management are good overall. The main school priority of high standards of teaching and learning has been achieved successfully.
- 5.5 Following several staff changes members of the senior management team have taken on many extra responsibilities. A strong commitment is evident at senior leadership level; however, further opportunities are wisely being sought for more delegation. The current school development plan cycle is coming to an end. It has been an ambitious plan with objectives placed in order of priority. Much has been achieved, but some timescales, such as that for the development of ICT, have needed to be extended. Overall, the planning process has led to significant overall improvement. School policies are subject to review, and at the time of the inspection several were due for ratification by the governing body and several omissions had to be rectified. Communication is good, with sufficient meetings for consultation to take place and for the efficient dissemination of information across the school.
- 5.6 Suitably qualified staff have been appointed and staffing levels are generous throughout the school, particularly for the oldest pupils in the senior school. Group sizes and sets are small and facilitate close individual attention for the pupils. Thorough arrangements are in place for checking the suitability of all adults who work with pupils but at the time of the initial visit there were some omissions in recording this information, which have since been rectified. The performance, management and review process for staff is highly effective; it holds teachers accountable for the standards their pupils achieve, and includes lesson observation and an identification of training needs. This has been very influential in securing a high standard of teaching. Teachers attend relevant in-service training courses or visit similar schools to keep up to date with developments in their subjects, and suitable training has been attended by staff on meeting the needs of all children and on safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Monitoring arrangements ensure consistency in teaching and learning but overall consistency in marking has yet to be achieved.

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

- 5.7 Links with parents and carers are excellent, which is in keeping with the school aim to work in partnership with parents.
- 5.8 The school provides high quality information for parents. Reports are regular and informative and many parents' evenings take place. The school maintains an 'open door' policy so that parents can readily discuss concerns, and pastoral staff contact parents when necessary. The 'pupil planner' for pupils in Years 3 to 11 provides an additional channel of communication. Parents' information evenings keep parents informed on topics such as safety and school journeys. Target-setting days involve parents in identifying suitable objectives for pupils. Numerous opportunities, such as assemblies in the junior school, prize-giving and art exhibitions and school productions, enable parents to see what is achieved. The school issues questionnaires to gauge parental opinion on topics. Governors write a termly report to parents and send them the minutes of the annual general meeting. A termly newsletter and weekly parent-mail communications are issued and the website is attractive and informative. Parents' concerns are very thoroughly and effectively dealt with in accordance with the school's published policy.

- 5.9 Parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive and largely in accord with inspection findings. Parents expressed particular satisfaction with their children's progress, the range of subjects provided and the standards of behaviour in the school, with which inspection findings concur. They feel that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and say that it is easy to communicate with. There was a small level of dissatisfaction regarding the provision of extra-curricular activities and encouragement from the school to be involved in its life and work, which was not borne out by inspection findings.
- 5.10 Many opportunities are provided for parents to be actively involved. The parent-teacher association (PTA) is very enthusiastic about the school and keen to involve as many parents as possible to help raise funds for the benefit of the pupils. In addition to coffee mornings and uniform sales, it organises a wide range of social events.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

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

6.1 This is a good setting that meets the needs of children well, fulfilling its aim to make their first experiences of school happy, positive and fun by providing a broad balanced curriculum with active first-hand experiences. Practitioners are highly committed to promoting children's welfare so that they feel safe and secure. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision having identified areas for improvement. The recommendations from the last inspection have been fully implemented.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good. Adults are highly committed to safeguarding children's welfare. Some shortcomings exist in recording staff background check details. Welfare policies and procedures, including risk assessments, ensure children's safety. The strong links with parents and outside agencies, including the local authority, provide valuable support that enhances children's learning. Results of the parents' questionnaire indicate that they are very happy with all that the setting provides. Regular monitoring ensures that standards are maintained and enables staff to focus on clear priorities for the future. Practitioners are committed to inclusive practice, ensuring that activities are well matched to children's individual needs. Suitably qualified and effectively deployed practitioners and high quality resources ensure good progress.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is good with some outstanding features. Practitioners' excellent knowledge of the curriculum and of the children, whom they recognise as unique, enables them to ensure that each one fulfils their potential. Nursery classrooms are attractive with stimulating displays and good quality resources stored at child height, allowing children freedom to choose their own activities. Good use is made of the attractive garden and the outside covered area is a valuable extension to the indoor classroom. The Reception classroom is bright and well resourced, but its location on the first floor without its own designated outside area limits outdoor activities. However, staff plan open-air activities such as nature walks and regularly join the Nursery children in their garden. Adults care for all children effectively, ensuring that they are safe and secure to enjoy their learning, but they are particularly sensitive to the needs of the two-year-olds and rigorous hygiene routines are in place in the classroom to prevent the spread of infection. Regular checks on the learning environment ensure that all equipment is safe.

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

6.4 Outcomes for children are good. They are happy, enjoy learning and are beginning to develop useful skills for the future. Children under three are becoming more confident in communicating their needs, show enjoyment in listening to stories and looking at books and are proud of their achievements. The three- to five-year-olds

are articulate, and engage in interesting conversations about the world in their role play. By the time they leave, children have made good progress towards the early learning goals and their skills in speaking, reading and writing are particularly strong, as is their personal development. They are well behaved, show high levels of independence and willingly accept responsibility for small tasks. They demonstrate very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.5 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those responsible for the registered provision must:
- keep records of the information they have used to assess suitability to demonstrate that checks have been done; such records must include the unique reference numbers of CRB Disclosures and the dates on which they were obtained.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

- 6.6 There have been no complaints to Ofsted about under-three provision.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision, other than take the action specified above.**

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

### **Inspectors**

Mr John King	Reporting Inspector
Mr Robert Haworth	Head, SHMIS and ISA school
Mrs Susan Jones	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Adrian Lowe-Wheeler	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Clare Papavergos	Director of Studies, ISA school
Mrs Valerie Goode	Early Years Lead Inspector