



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**TOWN CLOSE HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Town Close House Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Town Close House Preparatory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>926/6111</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>311293</b>		
Address	<b>Town Close House Preparatory School 14 Ipswich Road Norwich Norfolk NR2 2LR</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01603 620180</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01603 618256</b>		
Email Address	<b>head@townclose.com</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Graeme Lowe</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Richard Beck</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>456</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>72</b>	5-11: <b>320</b>
			11-13: <b>64</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Rosamund Walwyn</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>11 Oct 2011 to 12 Oct 2011 09 Nov 2011 to 11 Nov 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 November/December 2005.

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

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

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

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

- (i) The Equality Act.
- (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

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Town Close House Preparatory School is a day school for boys and girls aged from three to thirteen years. It is situated in extensive wooded grounds close to the centre of Norwich. Founded in 1932, the school is a charitable trust, under the oversight of a board of governors. The premises are based on a core of late Georgian and Victorian houses, to which a range of more modern classrooms and facilities have been added over the years, including a recently opened performance hall and sports hall. The school has a Christian ethos, welcoming pupils of all faiths. It aims to educate boys and girls together and to help them to achieve excellent standards across a broad range of experience, to enjoy their education and to develop diligence, self-confidence and responsibility, well prepared for success in their senior schools.
- 1.2 The school has 456 pupils on roll. It is divided into two departments: the pre-preparatory ('pre-prep') department, with an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting of 46 boys and 26 girls from 3 to 5 years of age and Years 1 and 2, with 60 boys and 52 girls; and its preparatory (prep) department, with 165 boys and 107 girls from 7 to 13 years of age. Some pupils leave at the end of Year 6 to go on to their senior school at 11+, with the majority staying on to Year 8. Pupils come mainly from the city of Norwich, but some come from the market towns and countryside of Norfolk and north Suffolk, and others from Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. They come from professional, business and farming backgrounds.
- 1.3 The school's EYFS setting is comprised of one nursery and three Reception classes, set in the accommodation of the pre-prep department. The 'Little Acorns' Nursery class has thirteen full time and twelve part time children. The Reception classes, Oak, Beech and Yew, have 47 children. The setting's aims are that all its children should develop a positive attitude to learning and fulfil their academic potential. The spirit of friendship and consideration are seen as fundamental preparation for pupils to lead happy and fulfilling lives.
- 1.4 The school does not select pupils. On the basis of a variety of standardised tests conducted by the school, the range of ability of the pupils is wide and varies significantly in different years. It is above average overall. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Fifty pupils receive some form of support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school recognises 28 pupils at least one of whose parents speaks a language other than English in the home, but all are fluent in English.
- 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 The pupils at Town Close House are highly and broadly educated young people, who are mature and responsible in their personal development and exceedingly well prepared for their future education and lives. The children in the EYFS develop outstandingly well because of the consistently high quality of provision. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve excellent standards across the school's extremely broad and rigorously planned and monitored curriculum and activities. Every pupil has the chance to shine at something. Their diligence and enthusiasm, and their skills as learners are particularly strong, because the consistently good and often excellent quality of teaching gives them scope to think, investigate and reflect for themselves. Learning support is excellent.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent because teachers unite their academic and personal development. Pupils feel safe, secure and valued because of the devoted and well organised care they receive throughout the school. The arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety are scrupulous in their attention to detail and careful recording and monitoring. Meticulous checks are made on the suitability of all governors, staff and volunteers before appointment. Governors strike the right balance between supporting and challenging the leadership of the school and have made sure that all the regulations are met. Management at all levels in the school is fully effective in monitoring and maintaining the school's ethos and quality. The school has made excellent progress in response to the recommendations and regulatory action points of the previous inspection report.
- 2.3 Both parents and pupils expressed high levels of approval in response to the pre-inspection questionnaires. Well over half the parents' responses showed strong approval and all or nearly all showed approval in relation to most of the questions. A few felt that they did not receive sufficient information about their children's progress, but inspectors found no evidence to support this view. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire, or to whom inspectors spoke, liked being at the school and showed strong approval for most aspects of provision. A significant minority did not agree that teachers gave rewards and sanctions fairly or that they treated pupils equally. Inspectors found it was true that some teachers tended to give out more rewards than others but found no evidence of unfair discrimination.

## **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) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Improve the consistency with which minor rewards and sanctions are awarded, so that all pupils recognise their fairness.

### **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 at Town Close House achieve excellent standards overall in relation to their abilities, talents and needs. Because of the range of areas in which they achieve, they are highly and widely educated, so that they are fully ready for the next stages of their education and lives, and equipped to make a valuable contribution to their next schools. Achievement has improved since the previous inspection, so that the school fully meets its aims by catering so effectively for such a wide range of abilities and talents. Because of the high quality of the teaching and pastoral care, the pupils' intellectual, personal, physical and creative capacities are fully extended and developed.
- 3.2 Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent foundations of knowledge, understanding and skills in their subjects. They have a striking ability to apply these across other subjects and contexts, because of the open-endedness and flexibility of much of the teaching, and the readiness of many teachers to link with other subjects and with the contemporary world. From Nursery to Year 8 pupils display strong foundations in literacy and numeracy, which they readily apply in many different contexts. They are competent and confident in their ICT skills. Their achievements across a wide range of sports and creative arts remain a major strength of the school. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve similarly well. Results at Common Entrance are very good and are improving. Virtually all pupils gain entry to the selective schools of their first choice, several with scholarships. Many pupils achieve well in national examinations for instrumental music and drama. The school has a distinguished record of sporting and other local and national successes.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in the national tests at ages 7 and 11 have been good in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. This level of attainment, supported by the school's own nationally standardised and progress data and the pupils' work in lessons, shows that pupils of all abilities, from well below to far above average, make good and often excellent progress. Pupils with SEND make particularly strong progress because of the highly organised learning support department, and the teachers it guides and supports.
- 3.4 Pupils are outstanding learners. Not only are they diligent and attentive students, they are inquisitive, ask questions and give unexpected answers, confident that these will be given serious consideration. They work intensively and rapidly on their own or in groups and teams, most obviously in the many ensembles, dramas and sporting contests in which they take part. At matches, for example, boys and girls showed mature team and tactical understanding. They have minds and imaginations of their own, evident in their excellent projects, poetry and prose.

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

- 3.5 The school provides an outstanding education in its range, organisation, continuity, monitoring and, above all, its inclusiveness. The school aspires to be a place in which every pupil can shine at something and this vision is realised. The school has dealt with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and further developed its strengths.
- 3.6 The curriculum is very broad and well balanced. The timetabled provision provides for an ample 26-28 hours a week from Year 1 onwards. All pupils study all subjects of the National Curriculum together with religious studies. They also study Dance from Nursery to Year 6, French from Year 3 and Latin from Year 5 for most pupils, as well as a very well planned programme of personal, social, and health education (PSHE). Because all pupils from Year 3 have substantial timetabled time for games, all pupils have access to high quality coaching in competitive sports. In addition to this, there is a high participation rate in the substantial range of extra-curricular activities, especially in the performing arts, but also in a variety of additional opportunities, such as fencing, chess and German. Many subjects are very well supported by visits and field trips, such as the Year 7 visit to France, which develops fluency in French, and the Year 6 humanities trip to Belgium, which visits the battlefields of Ypres. The residential visits for pupils from Year 4 upwards, effectively designed to promote progressive personal development, provide treasured memories for the pupils.
- 3.7 The school takes every care to ensure that pupils of all abilities and needs develop as well as they can. Skilfully graduated grouping of pupils by ability as they move through the school is regularly reviewed and flexibly applied. The learning support department has strong arrangements for initial assessment and continuous tracking of pupils with SEND. It communicates clearly with tutors and teachers through its individual education plans, understood and applied by all teachers and regularly reviewed. A rigorous 'impact file' is maintained, which demonstrates clearly the excellent progress made by the pupils the department supports. Communication with tutors and teachers is excellent and the department provides a high quality of support for pupils both in and out of class.
- 3.8 The policy for able, gifted and talented pupils has been fully implemented since the previous inspection. Pupils are identified as highly talented by individual departments, and their development planned and tracked within that broad framework, so that since the previous inspection the school has fully integrated this dimension into the mainstream of planning and supported the widest possible range of talent. As a result, in particular, pupils from the school have been especially successful in obtaining senior school scholarship awards in sport and the expressive arts as well as in more academic subjects.
- 3.9 The curriculum is very effectively planned and monitored. Since 2005, a deputy head of pre-prep has been appointed, providing a powerful link with the prep. The overall schemes set by heads of department in the prep are co-ordinated in detail by co-ordinators for Year 1-2 and Year 3-4, where significant parts of the curriculum are taught by class teachers. This approach allows for a steady development from largely class teaching in the pre-prep department, to fully specialist teaching in Years 5 to 8. Class teachers from each of Years 1 to 4 meet to review each week's

work and make adjustments. Liaison between the pre-prep and prep departments has thus greatly improved since the previous inspection and is excellent.

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

- 3.10 The quality of teaching is excellent. This improvement is the result of the work of staff at all levels and has enabled the school fully to meet its aims. Virtually all teaching implements the demanding teaching and learning policy to a high degree.
- 3.11 All teaching is based on secure planning and effective organisation, supported and shaped by a thorough knowledge of the attainment and needs of each pupil. Subject knowledge is strong and in many specialist subjects is scholarly. Outside the timetable also pupils benefit from highly skilled coaching and production skills, as a result of which many pupils have success in a range of sports and arts. With few exceptions, teaching makes lessons lively and interesting, varying the activities.
- 3.12 Teachers make use of the resources available fully and imaginatively. This is especially clear in the full exploitation of the remarkable wooded school grounds, which pupils of all ages relish, as a resource for field work, exploration and play. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together. Support staff contribute vitally and very efficiently to the quality of teaching and learning.
- 3.13 Teachers know their pupils exceedingly well, monitor their progress carefully and adjust their plans carefully in response to changing needs and potential. They assess them regularly and record progress information on the school server so that it can be aggregated and monitored by middle and senior managers, contributing to the school's well developed understanding of progress and needs across the whole curriculum in terms of individuals, classes and groups. This information, for example, has been very effectively used in tracking the development of pupils in Year 1 in literacy and numeracy skills and targeting support.
- 3.14 Marking is regular and usually offers a clear indication of standard and a positive comment. All pupils are set and are aware of clear targets for improvement. The school is aware from its monitoring of books, that the use of comments to promote further progress is not yet fully established and has the full establishment of this practice as a priority. It is also used to maximise the effectiveness of support for pupils with SEND.
- 3.15 The very best teaching is characterised by enthusiasm and verve; the questioning of pupils in interesting and challenging ways; listening with interest and a perfect balance between the priorities of making learning fun and laying rigorous foundations. As a result, pupils are deceptively autonomous in their study and teachers can change tack to encourage an unexpected suggestion, while maintaining the overall direction of learning. In science, for example, all pupils can suggest a "burning question" which will be returned to at some stage during the term.

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

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

- 4.1 Pupils at all levels in the school show excellent levels of personal development. In their lessons, around the school and in conversation with grown-ups and each other, they show themselves to be mature, confident, thoughtful and well-balanced young people, because personal development is embedded in the curriculum and reinforced by pastoral care. The quality has been sustained and developed since the previous inspection and fulfils the school's aims.
- 4.2 The pupils' conversation and writing are thoughtful and pupils are often deeply reflective about their own feelings and those of others. This was evident in science and English, and in religious education and assemblies. Pupils are able to relate in depth their understanding of the beliefs, practices and history of Buddhism. They show confidence in themselves and respect for the individuality and values of others, following the example set by their teachers.
- 4.3 Pupils show a clear sense of what is right and wrong both as individuals and as a community. The pupils support and understand the school's system of rewards and sanctions. They are proud of the code of conduct they themselves have agreed. Through the programme of PSHE and through their lessons they come to understand the importance of respect for the law. In an interview older pupils explained with conviction how important it is to everybody's learning and enjoyment of the school day that all members of the school body behave appropriately. Their development of confidence and maturity is much enhanced by their many exciting residential experiences.
- 4.4 Pupils display highly developed social awareness. The school is a lively and vigorous community which all pupils like and enjoy. Pupils are both spirited and extremely well behaved. The house system in Years 3-8 brings pupils of all ages together for assemblies and activities. The school council is an effective and autonomous body with its own pupil leadership and annual budget, placing its minutes before senior managers and getting a response to its proposals. Pupils take a pride in selecting charities every year and raising money for them, and show a keen understanding of why they are important. Younger pupils all take turns to take responsibility for important matters, such as collecting and returning registers, with great seriousness. Older pupils show maturity in many ways: Year 8 pupils assist younger pupils at meal times in a very supportive way; and the head boy and girl, boy and girl house captains as well as team captains and orchestra leaders show highly developed leadership skills.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is also a major strength. Pupils have a broad and deep introduction to European and world culture through their literature, art and music, both in lessons and in the activities of the school, in which they participate with gusto. They showed in discussion and in writing a broad and tolerant understanding of different beliefs and ways of life, so that, for example, pupils in Year 6, including some from Hindu and Buddhist families, showed interest and understanding in their study of the parts of the Ramayana.

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

- 4.6 The quality of welfare, health and safety is excellent because of the positive relationships between staff and pupils, promoted by a clear and tight system of pastoral support and rigorous safeguarding. It amply meets the school's aims, supporting the pupils' personal development successfully, and is reflected in the feelings of both parents and pupils expressed in the pre-inspection surveys.
- 4.7 All the pupils responding to the pre-inspection commentary agreed that they liked being at the school, and a substantial majority strongly agreed. Both in this survey and in interviews they felt that teachers were concerned for their welfare and that they had more than one adult that they could turn to with a worry. The school promotes good behaviour very effectively. A minority of pupils, including in discussions, felt that there were some inconsistencies in the practice of teachers, particularly in the awarding of positive or occasionally negative house points, but that this was an occasional and minor irritant, rather than a cause of unhappiness. Inspection evidence confirmed this, noticeably in the award of positive house points; in some teaching these were given to the whole class at the end of a lesson whilst other classes were praised without rewards being given. In lessons observed, teachers were reluctant to award negative points.
- 4.8 Staff know their pupils extremely well, and are able to intervene to support them early and effectively, because of the rigorous systems of pastoral care, recording and communication. Relationships between pupils are extremely good. Older pupils look out for younger pupils and the scale of extra-curricular activity guarantees that pupils are well known to many members of staff. Arrangements to guard against bullying are exceptionally strong. Every pupil responding to the pre-inspection survey and in interviews agreed that bullying is rare and effectively dealt with. The school's recording of bullying confirms this.
- 4.9 The arrangements for safeguarding, health and safety are comprehensive and staff show an excellent understanding of school policy and guidance and implement it effectively. In addition to the designated safeguarding person, four others have up-to-date inter-agency training, including two in the EYFS. All staff and volunteers have up-to-date basic child protection training, as do three governors, including the named safeguarding governor. Strong links are maintained with the local authority and child safeguarding board. Staff are aware of all safeguarding policies. All relevant activities and visits are thoroughly planned to control any risk. Equipment, including fire equipment is regularly checked and logged. Meticulous records are kept of training in this and all other relevant aspects of health and safety and first aid.
- 4.10 Admission and daily attendance registers are properly maintained and stored; parents are immediately informed in the event of an unexplained absence. The school goes out of its way to support pupils and adults with educational or physical needs. Pupils are strongly encouraged to value healthy eating and exercise. Snacks are all healthy and all eat a well balanced diet in the school dining room in a family atmosphere with staff or Year 8 pupils at the head of tables.

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

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

- 5.1 The school is extremely well and judiciously governed. The effectiveness of governance enables the school to maintain its ethos, improve its standards, and establish full compliance with statutory requirements. The great majority of parents, responding to the pre-inspection survey approve and most strongly approve of the governance of the school. Governors' broad range of skills and experience enable them to support the school very effectively. The governing body is organised into sub-committees on strategic areas such as finance, while keeping the core academic, pastoral and safeguarding matters within the main governing body as standing items on each agenda. This enables very committed governors to manage the development of the school premises successfully while concentrating on oversight of compliance and the progress, well-being and safety of pupils.
- 5.2 Finance is planned strategically and prudently and effectively supports the provision of good material and high quality staff. Governors have strong links with the school and its staff. They visit regularly and are kept fully informed by detailed reports from senior staff and presentations by heads of department and others. Governors judge nicely the balance between challenging the senior management and trusting it to get on with its job.

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

- 5.3 Excellent, collegial leadership at all levels and highly effective management are the keys to the success of the school in improving and fulfilling its ambitious aims. Their high quality is affirmed by both parents and the pupils themselves in the pre-inspection questionnaires, and also by staff at all levels. The clear sense of direction concentrates on the academic progress, personal development and well being of each pupil and on the critical evaluation of how effectively the school meets this aspiration. The effectiveness is even greater than at the previous inspection because of the improved links and transition between the pre-prep and prep departments. The pupils' personal and academic progress though the school has a seamless continuity. Above all, management successfully balances rigorous systems and controls, where necessary, with scope for individuality and initiative, so that different teachers can excel in different ways.
- 5.4 Leadership roles are clear and clearly understood. For example, the tricky balance between overall subject planning by heads of department in the prep and co-ordination and review within Years 1 to 4 has been very well secured. Staff at all levels take a full share and responsibility in the setting of policies and priorities, and the monitoring of their effectiveness in practice, and so have a clear commitment to their fulfillment. Administration and support staff, teachers and their assistants, work very well together, always in support of the academic and personal needs of the pupils. The four-year development plan, to which staff contribute fully through appraisal, departmental and management meetings, is comprehensive, linked to the school financial strategy, and reviewed annually.
- 5.5 The monitoring of teaching and care at all levels is rigorous, collaborative and effective. It includes scrutiny of pupils' work as well as lesson observation, including peer observation, and the keeping of records. Biennial appraisal for teaching staff is

thorough and supportive. Induction of new staff, with its system of mentoring, is excellent. Management has been extremely successful in appointing and retaining dedicated and highly qualified staff. Training is well planned to include improvements in teaching, assessment and the full range of safeguarding and welfare issues. Pre-appointment vetting of staff, volunteers and governors is comprehensive, with several senior staff trained in safer recruitment. The centralised register of appointments is in order and supported by individual checklists, included in staff files.

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

- 5.6 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are particularly positive about progress, the curriculum, pastoral care, behaviour, values, extra-curricular activities, governance, management and responses to questions. A small minority of parents expressed the view that they do not receive sufficient information about their children. Inspectors did not agree.
- 5.7 Parents see staff as approachable and feel welcomed. Communication with the school is excellent, whether by phone, email or in person. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in school life. They can attend a wide range of events including concerts, plays, assemblies and school sporting fixtures. Many assist on school trips. All parents are members of the Parent-Teacher Association, which organises many social and fund-raising activities to buy equipment to enhance the life of the school, whilst providing an opportunity for staff and parents to interact socially.
- 5.8 Parents are kept fully informed about the life of the school. Regular newsletters highlight the events that are taking place and celebrate the successes of pupils both in and out of school. Email enables parents to be contacted promptly. The excellent website is easy to navigate and gives parents access to all required policies. Informative written reports are sent to parents twice a year, with detailed analysis of their children's progress and suggestions for improvement. In addition to the regular parents' evenings, there are frequent parents' information evenings, both curricular and pastoral, for all ages. Parents can, if they wish, see form or subject teachers at any point in the year. Particularly valued by prep parents are the half-termly grade sheets which enable parents to track attitude to learning.
- 5.9 The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures scrupulously.

**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 EYFS is outstandingly effective. The school's aim that teachers and children pursue excellence in teaching and learning is fully met. Detailed observations inform meticulous planning by staff. Every child receives equally close personal attention, so that all individual needs are met. The children's progress and development are consistently good and often outstanding. The devoted staff team provides interesting and enjoyable challenges for children, skilfully balancing academic progress and pastoral care, and attaching the utmost importance to their welfare. Parents commented enthusiastically on all aspects of the school's provision in the pre-inspection survey. Rigorous professional self-evaluation, reviewed effectively at regular staff meetings, guarantees that, where relevant, plans are quickly adapted. Since the previous inspection, the setting has completely reviewed its practice, improved transitions to Year 1 and developed the outdoor learning areas.

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

6.2 Outstanding leadership and management demonstrate a clear vision, which constantly strives for improvement. Development planning involves all staff, has clear priorities and flows from careful self-evaluation. Policies, procedures, risk assessments and record-keeping, meticulously implemented, secure the needs and safety of the children as paramount. Staff are suitably qualified and properly checked before they are appointed. Considerable importance is placed on their professional development. The dedicated and efficient staff strongly influence outcomes and make excellent use of a wide range of well maintained, age-appropriate resources both inside and in the extensive and exciting outdoor environment. Outstanding links with parents, as well as helpful contacts with other agencies, ensure that the children's needs are fully met.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Because key persons have an excellent knowledge of the EYFS and the children, each is given individually tailored, stimulating, well supported and challenging experiences in all areas of learning. Colourful classrooms, together with the spacious and well-resourced playroom allow for a successful balance between teacher-initiated activity and purposeful play, occurring within the context of directed choices and child-initiated learning. Behaviour is generally good, and the few lapses are gently but firmly corrected. Constructive attitudes to health and personal safety are nurtured through the curriculum, regular exercise, the eating of healthy snacks and lunch, and are also consistently modelled by the adults. Outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys are checked daily and are maintained in good order.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children are outstanding. Children feel safe and secure and, from a wide range of starting points, make always good and often outstanding progress, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Staff have enhanced provision for individual pupils by introducing additional assessment procedures detailing individual strengths as well as areas for development, to be analysed and the results incorporated into their teaching and planning. Small group support is already in place and is monitored for its effectiveness. The children's skills in communication, language and literacy, numeracy and physical development are developing particularly well, so that they are already beginning to recognise familiar words, initial letter sounds and blends and can describe the properties of common two-dimensional shapes. They are confident swimmers and readily attempted back stroke for the first time. They show a growing understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the importance of physical exercise. They are aware of danger but know how to stay safe. They display excellent hygiene and safety practices, for example when using a knife to share out the fruit snack.

**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 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 Tony Hubbard

Mrs Susan Bailes

Mrs Carole McCulloch

Mr Howard Tuckett

Mrs Penny Oates

Reporting Inspector

Head of IAPS preparatory school

Head of GSA junior school

Head of IAPS preparatory school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector