



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HOLY TRINITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Holy Trinity International School

Full Name of School	<b>Holy Trinity International School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>885/6009</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY286599</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>517893</b>		
Address	<b>Holy Trinity International School Birmingham Road Kidderminster Worcestershire DY10 2BY</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01562 822929</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01562 865137</b>		
Email Address	<b>office@holytrinity.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Graham Hurrell</b>		
Chair of Trustees	<b>Mr Andrew McEwen</b>		
Age Range	<b>0 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>308</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (74 boys; 234 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>58</b>	5-11: <b>73</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>51</b>	11-18: <b>126</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>308</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Gaynor Carter</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>21 Sep 2010 to 22 Sep 2010</b>		
	<b>18 Oct 2010 to 20 Oct 2010</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection was conducted to assess the suitability of Holy Trinity International School for membership of the Independent Schools Association (ISA). It 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 2004.

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.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Holy Trinity International School is a co-educational independent day school for pupils aged from three months to eighteen years. There are currently 308 pupils enrolled, of whom 109 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), with 84 attending part-time. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls in the EYFS, and three-quarters of pupils in the preparatory school are girls. The senior school educated only girls until September 2009, when boys joined the sixth form, with a small number of boys being admitted to Year 7 from 2010. Founded in 1903 as a Roman Catholic convent school, run by the Trinitarian order, the school became a charity run by parents and trustees in 1985. In 2007 the school was acquired by International Education Systems (IES), and developed as an international school, overseen by a board of trustees. The group has oversight of schools in England, the USA, South Africa and Eastern Europe.
- 1.2 The school follows the IES mission statement: to educate and develop all pupils in a happy, caring community that places individuals at its heart and allows everyone to shine. It aims: to enable pupils to become fulfilled and confident young people in a globalised environment, promoting international and inter-cultural understanding; to encourage them to achieve the best possible qualifications, developing their talents to the full; to ensure a seamless continuum of education, with a strong home-school partnership.
- 1.3 The school continues to occupy the former convent site, with the EYFS integrated into the main school building. Since the previous inspection, the school has added new facilities for sixth formers, including an information and communication technology (ICT) room, created new play areas in the EYFS and renovated the kitchens. The head was appointed in 2009.
- 1.4 The average ability of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is in line with the national average. In Years 7 to 11 pupils are of above average ability nationally, while pupils' abilities in the sixth form are generally in line with the national average, although the small number of pupils makes definitive judgement difficult. A fairly wide range of abilities is evident in most year groups. Most pupils proceed from Year 6 into the senior school. A third of pupils continue into the sixth form, with leavers proceeding to other independent schools or maintained sixth-form colleges. Pupils come from a broad area of the West Midlands. Most are from professional households, with a broader range of backgrounds common in the EYFS. There is a very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). There are twenty pupils who have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
- 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 Pupils of all abilities achieve well. They make good progress, enabled by good teaching and a broad and balanced curriculum, complemented by an effective programme of activities. Many pupils achieve excellent standards in sports. Pupils are good learners, working together well and benefiting in their learning from the confident relationships they have with their teachers. Teaching is well planned, meeting the needs of pupils well, although extended challenge for pupils with particular talents is not always provided consistently.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They show high levels of self-esteem, responding well to the school's care for the individual. They undertake responsibility enthusiastically and successfully. Pupils demonstrate a strong moral awareness. Their cultural awareness is well developed, encouraged by the school's international ethos. Pupils are supported by excellent pastoral care within the caring community envisaged in the IES aims. Older pupils develop good relationships with younger ones. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, and health and safety contribute effectively to their care. Those pupils who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires were positive about the school.
- 2.3 Governance is good, and supports the school's aims well overall. Appropriate oversight is now in place and good planning, combined with secure financial consideration, supports the pupils' academic and personal development. Together with senior management, the trustees identify the school's needs well through effective self-evaluation. The school has responded successfully to the recommendations of the previous inspection report. Leadership and management are good. Policy making at all levels is appropriate and generally clear. However, responsibilities for developing teaching and learning are not currently shared systematically below senior management level, limiting the full realisation of the school's recent initiatives, particularly in the preparatory school. The school maintains good links with parents, who expressed satisfaction in pre-inspection questionnaires, often strongly, with the education provided.

## **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 references are obtained for all staff [Part 3, paragraph 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified the above shortcoming, 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. Ensure that existing good practice in teaching is applied consistently across all the subject areas, particularly in providing appropriate challenge for more able pupils.
  2. Share responsibility for implementing and monitoring academic policy more widely amongst staff, particularly in the preparatory school.
  3. Strengthen monitoring systems in the EYFS to include the timetabling of adult-led activities and the use of assessment data, and increase scrutiny by senior management.
  4. Increase opportunities for children in the EYFS to choose activities independently, particularly through improving the quality and availability of outdoor provision and of natural materials indoors.

### **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 is good, meeting well the school's aim to encourage pupils to develop their talents to the full. Pupils of all abilities, including those with LDD, with statements of SEN or with EAL, achieve well across all subject areas, and some reach excellent standards in class and in workbooks. The achievement of more able pupils, and those with particular talents, is good when they are given appropriately challenging tasks. Some older pupils achieve excellent standards in sports. More able sixth-form pupils show excellent perception in their understanding of texts.
- 3.2 Pupils develop good knowledge, skills and understanding, and articulate their ideas clearly, both orally and in writing. Preparatory school pupils express their ideas highly effectively for their age. Some GCSE writing shows very high levels of achievement. The pupils' reasoning skills are well developed. Pupils in the preparatory school show considerable development in thinking skills and apply these well as a result of the 'Learning Log' initiative. The pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are consistently good in both sections of the school. Pupils demonstrate good levels of mathematical understanding.
- 3.3 Senior school pupils use ICT well to produce computer-generated documents and manipulate data, and for design. Preparatory school pupils develop effective basic skills but have limited experience in putting these into practice across the curriculum. Pupils of all ages develop outstanding creative skills, producing art and design work which demonstrates high levels of imagination and originality for their respective ages.
- 3.4 Pupils perform successfully in instrumental, and speech and drama examinations. They enjoy success in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (D of E) scheme, with some regularly reaching the gold standard. Preparatory school pupils achieve consistently well in design and technology competitions. Pupils of all ages reach the highest standards in national competitions in a variety of sports, including football, trampolining, gymnastics, equestrian events and swimming, and teams enjoy consistent success at regional and local levels.
- 3.5 Over the most recent three years for which data is available, results in national tests at the age of 7 have been far above the national average for maintained primary schools. This level of attainment, together with the pupils' work in class, indicates that they make exceptional progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Those at the age of 11 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools, indicating good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools. Nearly all the grades awarded were A\* to C. The pupils' progress in Years 7 to 11, enabled by good teaching, is good in relation to those of similar ability, as confirmed by nationally standardised measures of progress and as seen in pupils' work. Results at A level, since the re-introduction of the sixth form, although small in number, show similar patterns of attainment and progress.
- 3.6 Pupils are good learners. They are focused in their work, settle quickly and generally show good levels of motivation. They listen to teachers and to each other to good effect. They work well with each other, and with their teachers, supported

by sure and confident relationships. Files and workbooks are orderly and well presented.

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

- 3.7 A good quality curriculum supports the needs of all pupils well. It has appropriate breadth, particularly in its provision for languages and creative subjects, and is well balanced. Good arrangements for learning in core subjects are enhanced by imaginative features, such as the 'Learning Log' in the preparatory school, which promotes independent learning and research of a topic. Enrichment programmes and arrangements for personal, social and religious education (PSRE) in both sections of the school support pupils' academic and personal development highly effectively. In the senior school there are opportunities for creative thinking, such as the extended project in the sixth form.
- 3.8 The preparatory school adopts a cross-curricular approach to learning, enabling pupils to develop skills consistently across different areas of learning, further supported by a humanities week during the year. The pupils' learning is enhanced by teaching from senior school subject specialists. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are given good opportunities to develop skills in core subjects while developing their experience in other subjects sufficiently well to be able to choose freely from a good range of options at GCSE. Sixth-form pupils have much flexibility in their choice of A-levels, with the school offering diverse subjects such as home economics, psychology and theatre studies. The strong international element of the school is reflected in the teaching of Spanish and French throughout the preparatory and senior schools.
- 3.9 The curriculum caters well for the pupils' individual needs, in line with the school's aim to place individuals at the heart of its work. The needs of pupils entering Year 1 from the EYFS are identified with reference to the progress they have previously made towards the Early Learning Goals. Standardised tests on entry to the school provide information about the pupils' potential and needs, and the school draws up appropriate plans to support the needs of pupils identified as having LDD or EAL. In the senior school these pupils may opt for a 'Learning to Learn' course in place of studying a second language. Good arrangements are made for pupils with statements of SEN. The needs of more able pupils and those with particular talents are met through excellent provision for sports and of some subject-related clubs, such as a stimulating science club, and through participation in external competitions. Further provision is the responsibility of individual subject teachers.
- 3.10 There is a well-developed careers programme for pupils from Year 9 onwards which includes opportunities for work experience and growing links with local industry. Sixth-form pupils say they are very happy with the support they receive for university applications.
- 3.11 Pupils are enthusiastic about the good range of clubs and activities available. Many choose to participate in several each week, with musical and sporting activities being particularly prominent. These range from bobbin lacing and Bollywood dancing in the preparatory school to film and language clubs in the senior school.
- 3.12 There are fruitful links with the local community. As part of the D of E scheme pupils help in local charity shops, visit older members of the community and sing in a local hospice. Pupils from local maintained schools are welcomed into school to view

productions. Visits from local religious representatives, the fire service and business figures enhance the curriculum. The pupils' experience is enriched by field trips and visits in the local area, such as, in the preparatory school, exploring the way of life on the canals at a local museum, and visits by senior school pupils to local industry. Residential trips further afield offer pupils additional opportunities for personal development, including trips to Wales for younger pupils and a planned expedition to Ecuador through the 'World Challenge' scheme. The school has a substantial number of links with other IES schools. Pupils studying the cold war in history have initiated contact with pupils in Hungary to discuss the topic.

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

- 3.13 Teaching is good, effectively meeting the needs of the pupils and enabling all to make good progress, in line with the school's aims. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects and employ a good variety of teaching styles in order to encourage pupils to fulfil their potential. Teachers know their pupils very well and are supportive and encouraging in lessons. Pupils with LDD and with statements of SEN receive the necessary teaching and support identified in their individual plans. More able pupils and those with particular talents are helped to make good progress in several areas, for example in sport, where they are given tasks tailored appropriately to their skills, but this approach is not yet fully developed in all subject areas.
- 3.14 Encouragement for pupils to take responsibility for their learning is evident in some teaching, for example in the sixth form, where pupils are given good guidance in how to research independently. They choose their own topics for examination tasks effectively, and younger senior school pupils are encouraged to show good levels of independence in science practicals. In some other subject areas, however, opportunities to encourage the pupils' independent learning are not taken consistently. In the preparatory school pupils are given holiday projects to complete, with successful results, and are encouraged to show initiative in lessons, for example suggesting alternative weather symbols to illustrate the conditions they observe.
- 3.15 Teachers plan lessons with care, using varied approaches to suit their pupils. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of activities and approaches, stimulating the pupils' interests and enabling them to make good progress. Innovative approaches are evident in the preparatory school, where pupils regularly work in pairs and groups, with a mix of abilities enabling them to help each other. In the senior school, teaching often captures the pupils' attention effectively at the start of lessons with brief, imaginative activities, such as team quizzes and 'odd one out' questions.
- 3.16 Lessons in the preparatory school are well paced and engage the pupils fully. In the senior school, the best lessons move at a good speed, but a small number of lessons engage the pupils less well when pace is unnecessarily slow. In the senior school a number of lessons start late, due to the pupils' late arrival from a previous activity. This reduces teaching time and hinders effective lesson planning. Homework supports the pupils' development well.
- 3.17 A wide range of resources is used effectively in teaching. The school is generally well resourced. Plans are already in motion to improve the limited availability of ICT equipment in the preparatory school that currently limits opportunities for pupils to develop their skills outside ICT lessons. In many lessons, use is made of interactive

whiteboards by staff, but opportunities to develop the pupils' interest further through more imaginative, interactive use are not always taken. Sixth formers have good facilities for private study, and the school library provides an adequate resource for all pupils, which is used regularly by them at lunch times.

- 3.18 Teaching makes good use of academic data obtained through national standardised tests to identify the pupils' potential and an effective system uses this information to monitor their progress. Recent initiatives in the preparatory school to extend the scope of this system have not yet reached full development. The assessment of the pupils' work is regular and generally thorough, following the school's policy in line with the recommendation of the previous report. Some marking is limited in scope, but the best marking contains encouraging comments and praise, giving helpful feedback to pupils. This is often amplified by discussion in class.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. They develop strong self-confidence in line with the school's aim to support each pupil as an individual. They reach high levels of self-awareness, stimulated by imaginative opportunities provided by the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the benefits of a recent experience entitled 'Don't just do something, sit there', which enabled them to explore methods of reflection and thought. Musical, dramatic and sporting opportunities enable pupils at all levels of ability to develop confidence. They develop an effective understanding of Christianity and other faiths through services, PSRE lessons, form periods and assemblies. Preparatory school pupils visit a synagogue to gain first-hand experience of Judaism. Sensitively delivered modules on issues such as bereavement provoke strong empathy amongst senior school pupils and they speak highly of such experiences.
- 4.2 Pupils develop a strong moral understanding. Preparatory school pupils show a good understanding of the need for rules in their lives. Older pupils in the senior school write and speak objectively and sensitively about moral issues such as the treatment of women in the nineteenth century and racism. They appreciate opportunities to discuss the moral dimensions of contemporary events, such as natural disasters caused by drilling for oil. Awareness of concepts of fairness is reflected clearly in the pupils' approaches to issues of equality in trade, such as calls by the student council for fairly traded products to be sold at school events.
- 4.3 The pupils' excellent social development is demonstrated in the high standards of behaviour evident throughout the school. It encompasses a willingness to accept opportunities to take responsibility offered by roles such as house captains in both preparatory and senior schools, representatives on the student council, and hosts at open days and other school events. Pupils speak enthusiastically of their aspirations for the school and put their ideas into practice effectively through events such as fund-raising. Mentoring systems enable older pupils to take responsibility for helping younger ones and they give effective help in clubs and sporting activities. Preparatory and senior school pupils respond well to the opportunities offered in the curriculum for them to learn about civic institutions, showing a good understanding, relative to their age, of contemporary events, and concepts such as coalition government. Charitable work is a strong feature of school life, with many fund-raising activities, centred on the house system.
- 4.4 Pupils develop strong cultural awareness. The international ethos of the school plays a significant part in their development of a natural tolerance of, and interest in, other cultures. Pupils in both sections of the school develop good, individual responses to art and music of other cultures, inspiring some colourful displays of work by those in the preparatory school. They celebrate festivals of many cultures and all develop their understanding through language work, but the cultural awareness of preparatory school pupils is sometimes less overt than that of older pupils. Older senior school pupils have participated in a visit to a school in Florida and there are growing links with other IES schools. These extend the pupils' understanding gained from the curriculum and from assemblies with international themes. Opportunities to sing in assembly as part of the choir are much enjoyed by pupils and they respond well to them. Art work around the school shows sophisticated appreciation of the styles of artists from the past, such as Van Gogh, reinterpreted in the pupils' own creations.

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

- 4.5 Pupils receive excellent pastoral care within the happy, caring environment envisaged in the school's aims. Class teachers in the preparatory school and form tutors in the senior school give high levels of support and guidance that pupils appreciate. Friendships across year groups are common in all age groups, and this is supported by the house system. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to mix that this provides and feel that it adds to the family atmosphere of the school, as well as engendering a spirit of gentle competition. Relationships amongst pupils are positive and fruitful, as are those between pupils and staff. Pupils of all ages comment that they know to whom they can turn, including, in the case of younger children, to older pupils, that they are seen as individuals and that they feel safe.
- 4.6 The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. Arrangements to guard against harassment or bullying, and to deal constructively with any unacceptable behaviour, are strong. Pupils comment that any concerns in this area are dealt with effectively at an early stage.
- 4.7 The school's safeguarding arrangements are now appropriate but in past years the pursuit of references prior to the appointment of staff has not been consistent with the guidance given in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*. All staff, including those with specific responsibilities, undertake appropriate training in safeguarding, and procedures are clearly understood.
- 4.8 Arrangements to ensure the pupils' health and safety are good. All the requirements of the previous inspection report have been met. Access for those with physical or learning needs is well planned. Measures to prevent risks of fire and other hazards are good, as are arrangements for health and safety on educational visits, with assessments of risk completed effectively for different types of visits and trips. Good arrangements exist for pupils who feel unwell and these are operated effectively in conjunction with a comprehensive first aid policy. Registration of pupils is methodical and absence is followed up quickly. The school maintains an appropriate admission register. Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through advice on developing healthy eating habits within the PSRE programme, and by being encouraged to take regular exercise. School food is agreed by pupils to be of good quality.

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

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

- 5.1 Good governance supports the school's aims well overall, encouraging the development of those qualities that give it a distinctive character effectively. The strong international ethos of IES adds a rewarding dimension to the pupils' educational experience. The trustees receive regular information from senior management figures. They attend school events, and review safeguarding and health and safety arrangements through regular scrutiny visits. The reports received and visits made enable appropriate oversight of those areas where trustees have legal responsibilities to be maintained. However, government guidance on recruitment checks for new staff has not been consistently applied in the past.
- 5.2 The trustees share a good range of experience in finance and the law. The educational experience of the trustees enables them to give good guidance and advice concerning all age groups within the school, including the EYFS, contributing to the high level of the pupils' achievements. The trustees support the school's planning well, both in terms of strategy and in secure financial provision and oversight. Trustees provide the school with good levels of challenge through high expectations. The recommendation of the previous report, to establish long-term strategic goals, particularly with regard to the resources required, has been met well. The school buildings are maintained appropriately, although décor in some areas does not presently match the high standards in others. Plans are in place for gradual refurbishment as finances allow.

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

- 5.3 Good leadership and management ensure that the school's aims are met well. Imaginative educational direction contributes much to the pupils' academic progress and personal development. The needs of the school are identified well through self-evaluation, and appropriate policies are formulated to address these. Policies are progressive in nature and generally clear. Due to the size of the school, most class teachers in both sections carry responsibility for development of their subject and fulfil this role effectively. Many policies have been put in place recently as a result of well-planned initiatives to develop teaching and learning in diverse areas. Their initial implementation and monitoring have been effective. Much responsibility for this, and for further development, rests with a small number of senior staff. Wider responsibilities are not currently shared systematically below senior management level, limiting the full realisation of the school's recent initiatives, particularly in the preparatory school. Pastoral management at all levels operates highly effectively, creating the family environment envisaged in the school's aims.
- 5.4 Natural links between the preparatory and senior schools ensure continuity of approach and contribute to the integrated development of the school. Development planning includes realistic aspirations for the school's future, and clearly identified criteria for success. Careful financial planning ensures that pastoral and academic areas of school life receive appropriate resources.
- 5.5 The school secures well-qualified staff who fully support the school's ethos. A regular system of staff review enables staff to develop their skills and interests through linked training, which addresses the school's needs. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, and for health and safety, are implemented well overall,

including training of all staff in safeguarding procedures. Checking procedures to ensure the suitability of staff and governors to work with children are now fully robust, and the central register is now maintained effectively, although there have been shortcomings in the checking of references in the past. The school's sense of community is enhanced by the effective work of secretarial, administrative and other non-teaching staff, who play an active role in supporting pupils.

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

- 5.6 The school maintains good links with parents, fulfilling well its aim to develop strong home-school partnerships. These support the pupils' academic and personal development effectively. Parents are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school by attending sporting fixtures, performances and some assemblies. They are invited into classrooms every Friday as part of an 'Open Friday' initiative and parents of preparatory school pupils can meet senior staff on Tuesdays. Not all parents registered awareness of these two sessions in discussions.
- 5.7 Parents' responses to pre-inspection questionnaires show them to be satisfied, often strongly, with the education and pastoral care provided for their children. They register particular satisfaction with their children's progress, encouragement to be involved in the school's life and work, and communication with the school. A small number expressed concerns about the amount of homework given to preparatory school pupils. These have been addressed by the school, ensuring a better balance of work throughout the week. The homework planner provides a valuable channel of communication and this system operates well.
- 5.8 A strong parents' association is active in both the preparatory and senior schools. It supports the school's aim to create an integrated community successfully. It raises funds to support the school's activities through investment in new equipment and books, partly through proceeds from a second-hand uniform shop that it operates in school.
- 5.9 Staff are regularly available for consultation with parents, both informally and at annual parents' evenings. Regular, good quality reports give parents information on academic attainment and progress in the full range of subjects, together with helpful targets for the future. There are additional half-term effort and achievement grade sheets. Recent revisions to the reporting system in the preparatory school have been effective. Parents of all pupils are given the opportunity to comment about their children's reports on a reply slip.
- 5.10 Parents and prospective parents are given all necessary information, which is of good quality. A comprehensive, regularly updated website includes additional, useful administrative information. A weekly newsletter highlights recent pupil achievements and forthcoming events. Curriculum evenings at the start of the academic year in the senior school and 'Meet the Teacher' events in the preparatory school give good information on the year ahead.
- 5.11 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints policy, but this has not needed to be put into operation recently. The school handles parents' concerns well. Staff are readily available to discuss any concerns and are keen to support parents.

**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 provision is good. Staff create a welcoming and caring learning environment where children and families are highly valued. The outstanding quality of relationships throughout the EYFS and staff's deep knowledge of each child ensure children's needs are met well, and progress is steady. Effective policies and overall procedures underpin the children's safety and well-being. The dedicated staff team work consistently well together to improve practice, and keep updated through links with the local authority. Since the last ISI and Ofsted inspections, the EYFS has addressed all the areas for improvement. Resources and planning for those under the age of three have improved although development in this area is not complete.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership creates a tight-knit staff team who constantly reflect on practice. The EYFS vision, to nurture happy children who can communicate confidently, permeates the Early Years. An ambitious development plan accurately identifies key areas for improvement. The children's well-being is underpinned by comprehensive safeguarding policies, although checking of references has been inconsistent in the past. Parents speak highly of the provision, and fully appreciate the outstanding communication between home and school. Informal monitoring of daily practice leads to consistently good care, but end-of-year assessment data is not used to target improvement. There are appropriate links to the whole-school management structure but these are not yet fully effective. Inclusion is integral to practice. Room organisation and resources vary in quality, with a lack of natural materials; at best, they stimulate and support learning well.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is good. Adults have warm and sensitive interaction with children, which establishes strong foundations for learning. The whole environment is bright, cheerful and safe. The Nursery provides a good range of activities across a number of rooms, but strict timetabling limits children's access to sand, water and creative play. Staff organise interesting experiences outdoors, and plans recognise the need to develop the Reception outdoor space, which is currently uninspiring. The quality of the children's 'learning journey' documents is exceptional. They show insightful observations, identify the need for extra support and enable staff to track progress effectively. Staff dedicate excellent attention to children with additional needs. Planning identifies children's interests well to enthuse learning. However, consecutive adult-led activities in the Nursery limit children's opportunities for independent play on some days. Adults emphasise safety with children as they go on nature walks and move around the building. The staff's calm and respectful approach naturally promotes good attitudes and behaviour.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are good overall. Nursery children play joyfully outdoors and Reception children become happily absorbed in role play. Achievements at the end of the EYFS are satisfactory. Younger children confidently talk about the sounds they hear outdoors; Reception children competently discuss what keeps them healthy. Children play socially and independently from an early age. Children develop very good computer skills, and use a wide range of tools and materials creatively as they progress through the EYFS. However, children are not always challenged by the everyday environment to investigate and solve problems, through using, for example, open-ended resources. Children learn about keeping themselves safe, develop good hygiene routines in the Nursery and learn about healthy food choices. Their role play becomes more complex through to Reception, demonstrating their growing understanding of the wider world. Children respond enthusiastically to adults and are caring and friendly as a result of the nurturing, family ethos of the school.

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

- 6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

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

- 6.6 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of trustees, 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 Martin Bussey	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Holland	Head, ISA school
Mrs Myra Howard	Head of Sixth Form, GSA school
Mrs Jane Merriman	Head, IAPS school
Ms Jo Blank	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Val Holloway	Early Years Team Inspector (Head of Nursery, IAPS school)