



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**URSULINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Ursuline Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Ursuline Preparatory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>881/6034</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1058282</b>		
Address	<b>Ursuline Preparatory School Old Great Ropers Great Ropers Lane Great Warley Brentwood Essex CM13 3JW</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01277 227 152</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01277 202 559</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmistress@ursulineprepwarley.co.uk</b>		
Headmistress	<b>Mrs P Wilson</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs F Deery</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>170</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (80 boys; 90 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS):</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>5-11: 119</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>170</b>		
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs I Parker-Litjens</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection date/EYFS	<b>04 May 2010 to 05 May 2010</b>		
Final (team) visit	<b>07 Jun 2010 to 09 Jun 2010</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It 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 May 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 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard 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 does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ursuline Preparatory School, Great Warley, is a co-educational day school for 3 to 11 year olds. It was founded in the 1930s, and in 1994 it became independent of the Ursuline High School and moved to its present site on the outskirts of a village near Brentwood. The school has a governing body, with five of its members acting as trustees. The school is centred on a Victorian house, which incorporates the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting as well as the teaching rooms for older pupils. The EYFS children have easy access to their outdoor classroom that is adjacent to the main building; since the last inspection, an additional outside play area has also been developed for the older pupils. The present head was appointed in 1994. The school currently has 170 pupils, with 51 in the EYFS of whom 7 attend part-time. There are 40 pupils in the infants section (Years 1 and 2) and 79 in the junior school (Years 3 to 6). The number of boys and girls is similar, and the maximum class size is twenty.
- 1.2 Most pupils come from professional families, and live in Brentwood and the surrounding villages. Due to its location, nearly all the pupils travel by car to the school. At present, no pupil has English as an additional language. Fourteen pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) all of whom receive individual specialist help from learning support staff; no pupil has a statement of special educational need. Standardised tests show that the pupils' average ability is above the national average, with very few pupils having an ability level below the national average.
- 1.3 The school aims for excellence in all aspects of school life. Its principal aim is to provide the children with a sound Catholic, moral, social and academic education, within a happy and caring atmosphere founded on traditional values and fair discipline, thus enabling pupils to achieve their full potential in all areas of school life.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Pre-Reception	Nursery
Reception	Nursery
Kindergarten	Reception

### ***Main School***

School	NC name
Intermediate	Year 1
Transition	Year 2
Lower One	Year 3
Upper One	Year 4
Lower Two	Year 5
Upper Two	Year 6

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 All pupils make excellent progress and achieve well in relation to their ability. They develop high standards of literacy and numeracy as they move through the school. The pupils' results in national tests at ages seven and eleven are excellent, and many eleven-year-old pupils gain entry to selective maintained schools and to independent schools, with a significant number being awarded scholarships. Pupils also achieve outstanding results outside the classroom, especially in many sports, music and drama. The well-planned curriculum is broad and suitably balanced. Pupils benefit greatly from high quality teaching, with teaching assistants playing a role with all year groups. Teachers know their pupils and their subjects well, and prepare them very thoroughly for external examinations. The pupils' strong and positive approach to learning is outstanding, as is their behaviour.
- 2.2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Their spiritual development is centred on the Catholic faith, and is characterised by thoughtful pupils who reflect seriously on issues; they develop a strong moral code, feeling passionately about right and wrong. They show considerable awareness of younger pupils and the needs of others less fortunate than themselves, raising significant sums of money for charities. Pupils in many classes develop a keen sense of responsibility by undertaking the duties they are asked to perform. Pupils are well aware of their own culture, and show tolerance and interest in other faiths and backgrounds. The staff provide exemplary pastoral care and monitor the progress of each pupil closely. Good policies are implemented conscientiously to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
- 2.3 The school is governed well, and its management is excellent, with strong, energetic leadership at the heart of its success. Staff follow willingly the clear educational direction provided, and pupils respond by working hard and progressing very well, both socially and academically. The monitoring of teaching by subject co-ordinators has improved significantly since the last inspection, as have the assessment procedures in non-core subjects. The school is aware of a weakness in the writing of a significant number of reports. Links with parents are good, and outstanding in a number of respects. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, pupils said how fortunate they felt to be part of the school and their parents approved strongly of all aspects of the school, adding many glowing comments along with a few criticisms regarding the provision for French and homework set prior to national tests.

## **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 2003, as subsequently amended.
- 2.5 The school's provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and no action was required.

### **(ii) Recommended action**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure all reports provide parents with individual comments about the progress and ability of their child in each subject.
  2. Develop further the use of the outdoor area by EYFS children to initiate their own 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 From the EYFS to Year 6, pupils achieve excellent standards. The pupils' results in national curriculum tests at ages 7 and 11 have been excellent when compared with the national average for maintained primary schools, reflecting the strong progress they make relative to their abilities; the achievements of the pupils are especially high in mathematics. The school successfully meets its aim of helping each pupil to reach their full academic potential. Pupils with LDD make good progress, aided by the presence of teaching assistants in all classes. When pupils leave at age 11, the great majority transfer to independent or selective maintained schools; in each of the past three years, about eight pupils have gained scholarships to independent schools.
- 3.2 Pupils are articulate and inventive, and they express themselves with good vocabulary. They listen carefully to each other's comments and to the instructions of their teachers. In the younger classes the pupils develop good handwriting skills. Older pupils write extended pieces that are often imaginative, and use a wide and descriptive vocabulary. Oral communication is of a high quality at all ages. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate mental agility and they acquire a wide range of skills. They are able to apply concepts accurately, and to relate them to real-life situations; for example, Year 6 pupils understand complex number sequences and their occurrence in nature. Pupils enjoy doing scientific experiments and show good understanding of work covered; even the oldest were, however, unsure when interviewed about the meaning of a fair test to yield sound results. Logical and independent thought is developed well and is encouraged by teachers; pupils are able to think quickly and can use new ideas effectively. The pupils' creativity is particularly strong in music and drama. Computer skills are high and are used increasingly by older pupils. A strong feature in all lessons is the pupils' concentration and their readiness to tackle new challenges.
- 3.3 Pupils distinguish themselves in national mathematics challenges and general knowledge quizzes. Music and speech and drama examination results are excellent, with many pupils passing with merit and distinction grades. Parents appreciate the high standards of the major dramatic production performed every other year by all the pupils in a local theatre; in other years, junior pupils perform a play in the school hall whilst younger ones compete very successfully in a national music competition. Regional, and sometimes national, triumphs in athletics, cross-country, cricket, netball, soccer and swimming illustrate the school's strength in sport. The pupils' many successes inside and outside the classroom owe much to their positive attitudes, the opportunities provided by the curriculum and the positive relationships they enjoy with their enthusiastic teachers.



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

- 3.4 The well-planned curriculum is broad and appropriately balanced, and now includes extra provision for the most able junior pupils. It fully meets the needs of the pupils of all ages and abilities, helping them to make excellent progress. The school's aim to provide the pupils with a sound Catholic, moral, social and academic education is met well. The division of the teaching day into 15-minute segments allows lessons to vary appropriately in length according to the needs of different subjects.
- 3.5 All requisite areas of learning are included, with a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. The curriculum in the EYFS covers all six areas of learning. From Reception upwards, pupils are given a basic introduction to French, and verbal reasoning is taught to pupils in the junior school; design technology is sometimes incorporated in art lessons. The personal, social, health and citizenship education course is well planned and largely implemented by regular assemblies; it makes an important contribution to the pupils' strong personal development. All subjects are taught by class teachers with the exception of French, information and communication technology (ICT), music and games; pupils have regular swimming lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties receive strong support and all staff are aware of their needs; they are given individual education plans and also receive specialist help either individually or in small groups. The presence of teaching assistants in many lessons for pupils of all ages potentially reduces the ratio of teachers to pupils, and helps all pupils to learn effectively within these mixed ability groups. Gifted pupils in Years 3 to 6 have been identified and the school provides them with extension lessons in English, mathematics and logical and lateral thinking; these take place during lesson time, reducing the class size still further for the other pupils.
- 3.6 Links with the local community, and being involved with fund raising for national and international charities, bring a richness to life at the school. Every year Christmas boxes are made for needy children in Eastern Europe. In 2005 each class adopted an orphan from the Indian Ocean tsunami and now pays for their education each year. Pupils raised a very significant sum of money last year to help a teenager suffering from cancer.
- 3.7 Visitors to the school, and visits by pupils to events or places outside the school, are a strong feature of pupils' experience. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also benefit greatly from residential visits to France and to an activity centre. A wide range of extra-curricular activities extends the curriculum before, during and after the school day. As well as the busy sports programme, pupils are able to take part in activities such as the band, the choir, German, country dancing, sewing, chess and draughts; most of these activities are run with great diligence. Many pupils have individual music lessons and those with sporting talents benefit from the school's links with local cricket, tennis, soccer and netball clubs.

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

- 3.8 The pupils' outstanding achievements are strongly promoted by well-informed and helpful teaching, much of which is excellent, and by very thorough and expert preparation for examinations. The teaching is a major factor in helping pupils to develop their academic potential to the full in line with the school's aim. Teachers know their pupils well and inculcate in them a strong work ethic. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported effectively in class and in withdrawal lessons by learning support specialists.
- 3.9 Teachers plan appropriate lessons carefully, with additional tasks to extend the challenge for more able pupils sometimes being provided. All teachers are knowledgeable in the subjects they teach, and their enthusiasm is clearly evident. Basic skills in English, mathematics and reading, are covered thoroughly and are practised frequently. In English, teachers utilise the pupils' well-developed literacy skills to excellent effect; discussions are lively and interesting, for both pupils and teachers. In a lesson on mental arithmetic the understanding of pupils was increased when they were encouraged to explain their different methods of arriving at each correct answer. Much teaching is imaginative and challenging, with lessons moving at a brisk pace, thus sustaining the interest of the pupils. Rapid progress in the skills needed for rounders was achieved in a short period of time by expert coaching, with frequent pauses to explain clearly the correct techniques and strategies. A few lessons are dominated by teachers' input without the sufficient variation of activities needed to sustain the full concentration of pupils. An appropriate amount of homework is usually set, but is excessive for seven year-olds as national curriculum tests approach. Teaching assistants are utilised very profitably in some lessons. Good resources are used well and every classroom is now equipped with an interactive whiteboard (IWB). Pupils say they make some use of the library to enhance their work, but more often they use the school's computers for research. Teachers encourage the development of ICT skills, and formal ICT lessons are often linked to studies in other subjects.
- 3.10 Baseline assessments of EYFS pupils are followed by termly assessments of the reading ages of older pupils, either via word recognition or comprehension. These standardised tests, along with annual national curriculum tests in the core subjects allow the progress of pupils to be tracked most efficiently. Since the last inspection, significant improvement has been made in assessing progress in other subjects at regular intervals. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and encouraging, with constructive comments being made verbally and sometimes recorded on paper. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are given targets, usually noted in their homework diaries or exercise books.

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

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

- 4.1 Pupils of all ages, including the children in the EYFS, have outstandingly well-developed personal qualities, and are friendly and polite. The school is highly successful in its aim to promote strong spiritual, moral and social development. The pupils are thoroughly responsible and tolerant, with older ones ever ready to help younger children. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils wrote of their pleasure at being part of this school and their appreciation of the support and encouragement they receive.
- 4.2 Pupils have an excellent sense of the spiritual. They take a full part in assemblies, saying prayers with conviction and singing religious songs with enthusiasm; they listen attentively and are ready to provide thoughtful answers. The religious ethos of the school is a natural part of a pupil's everyday life; they say prayers at the beginning and end of the morning, and at the end of the day. Pupils also have an understanding of the beliefs of other religions through visits and guest speakers. Their self-esteem is raised by gaining the many rewards on offer, with the weekly award of cups and teddies being highly prized.
- 4.3 Pupils are confident and outgoing; their manners and their behaviour throughout the school are exemplary. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and of justice and fairness. They understand and support the high standards of behaviour expected of them; sanctions are clear but rarely needed. Pupils greet adults and peers when they meet, and they make way for adults as they move around the building.
- 4.4 Pupils are extremely well developed socially, and the culture of all pupils helping each other is engendered at an early age, with respect for all permeating the whole school. The Year 6 pupils are superb role models, and they play a prominent role in assemblies and around the school. Pupils from each class in Years 3 to 6 are elected to the school council, and they take seriously their responsibility for representing the views of their peers; other pupils speak positively of its impact, feeling that their wishes will be considered sensibly. The deputy head boy and deputy head girl act as charity representatives; a recent dance competition was advertised and organised by pupils, raising money and focusing on the needs of others.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is strongly developed. They have a tolerant attitude towards those from cultures other than their own, aided by parents with a variety of backgrounds speaking in assembly. They enjoy days that emphasize other nationalities and the food they eat. Through special celebrations such as masses of obligation in school and in the local cathedral, along with visits to mosques and temples, as well as museums and galleries, pupils gain a wide appreciation of their own and other cultures. By Year 6, pupils know about public institutions, and the significance of the European Union and the United Nations.

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

- 4.6 The pastoral care provided for pupils is excellent, and fulfils the aims of the school of providing a happy and caring atmosphere founded on traditional values and fair discipline. The staff provide outstanding support and guidance through their roles as class teachers and section leaders. These pastoral arrangements are highly effective in fostering the pupils' personal development and academic achievement. All staff promote pupils' self-confidence through support, praise and encouragement.
- 4.7 The staff are fine role models for the pupils, and their relationships with the pupils are first-rate. The warm, family atmosphere of the school is very apparent, and pupils genuinely care for one another. High standards of dress, speech, work and behaviour are actively promoted. Since the last inspection, more midday assistants have been appointed to oversee the playground and liaise with class teachers over any concerns; after-school care has also been successfully introduced, supervised by a teacher. Any concerns about pupils are discussed between staff and are recorded by class teachers.
- 4.8 A green box has been introduced in which junior pupils can post a note to indicate they would like to have a confidential discussion with a senior member of staff; pupils like this system, which works well. The school rules are well known and pupils consider them fair. Pupils work hard to achieve recognition for good work; it is rewarded by stickers and house points which, in turn, lead to certificates and recognition in assemblies. Appropriate sanctions are in place for misbehaviour, and yellow and red cards are given for minor misdemeanours. The pupils talked affectionately about the cards, being pleased that they were given a warning in the same way as their football heroes. Pupils do not consider bullying to be an issue and they agree that if it were to happen it would be quickly resolved.
- 4.9 Health and safety procedures are effective, with thorough risk assessments covering all aspects of school life. Senior staff regularly walk around the school building and grounds looking for any safety issues that need attention. Electrical testing is carried out each year by an external agency. All staff receive appropriate training in first aid, and the school has an adequate medical room. The safeguarding of pupils is good and all staff have had child protection training. The safe recruitment of staff is undertaken meticulously. The school has an appropriate plan to improve educational access for those with disabilities. All necessary measures have been taken to minimise the risk of fire; fire drills are arranged each term, sometimes with an escape route blocked to simulate a real fire. Pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise; parents are encouraged to promote healthy eating habits when they provide packed lunches for their children to bring to school. The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained.

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

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

- 5.1 The school is well governed. The trustees are effective in overseeing welfare, health and safety, and they provide a high quality of resources and staffing. They take very seriously their role of maintaining the ethos and quality of the school, and of ensuring compliance with regulatory and legal requirements.
- 5.2 The trustees meet regularly with the headmistress, with a focus on financial matters and future planning, and the full governing body, which includes trustees, members of staff and representatives of the parents association, meets each term to consider the written report of the headmistress and any other matters deemed appropriate. The governors also receive the weekly school newsletters; recently, governors have deepened their knowledge of the school by hearing presentations by subject coordinators. The trustees have considerable experience of finance, law and surveying; however, at present, the governing body does not include people who have educational expertise and are independent of the school, who would be well placed to question and applaud the headmistress regarding school matters. The trustees have discussed staffing and the size of the school in the foreseeable future, and their decisions have been appropriately minuted.
- 5.3 A trustee has been appointed to be part of the interview panel for new teachers; this is good practice. Governors keep abreast of school needs, and they attend the popular annual dinner of parents and staff, as well as other school functions such as the Christingle service.

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

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school, including the EYFS, are excellent. This is an efficiently run school. The drive and energy of senior management inspire both staff and pupils to work hard and achieve outstanding results inside and outside the classroom, whilst ensuring the school's principal aim of providing pupils with opportunities to develop sound religious, moral and social values is fully met. Staff are united in a common purpose, with a clear educational direction provided by the senior managers; the school has carried out a thorough evaluation of its academic and pastoral provision; policies have been clearly written and are implemented effectively by teaching staff and others. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has been extended successfully since the last inspection to include regular monitoring of the teaching of colleagues.
- 5.5 The senior managers give strong support to the headmistress, with whom they each have weekly meetings. The pattern of regular meetings for all staff and for senior managers ensures that ideas are fully discussed, and in these ways all are kept thoroughly informed about school matters, with an appropriate focus on the development and well-being of the pupils. All staff have been involved in producing the comprehensive development plan, which covers each aspect of the school. All staff are observed teaching twice a year by the headmistress, and in addition, they have two discussions regarding their aims for the current year and the one following; this is good practice but teachers do not evaluate their own performance, nor have a written record of what is decided. In-service training (INSET) occurs for the whole staff before the start of each term and a good proportion of staff attend individual, external INSET courses, reporting back to colleagues afterwards. A thorough

induction programme is in place to help any new teachers adapt easily to the school, with a mentor to aid them in their early weeks. It is some years since a newly qualified teacher joined the staff, but the school subscribes to the policy of a suitably reduced timetable with a senior member of staff monitoring progress.

- 5.6 The non-academic staff support the school exceptionally well, and contribute fully to the family atmosphere and the very efficient way in which the school is run; the buildings and grounds are immaculately kept, and parents and visitors appreciate the warm and professional welcome they receive from the office staff. The recruitment of staff is carried out meticulously with all appropriate checks in place.

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

- 5.7 Links with parents are good, with some outstanding features, such as the provision for parents of pupils joining the school, and their discussion with the headmistress of their child's academic and social progress after the first term. The parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the school's provision, especially its pastoral care, the personal development of the pupils and communication with staff. Many glowing comments were added, highlighting the caring nature of the school, the excellence of the office staff and the part played by the headmistress in running such a successful school, with her presence at the school door every morning especially appreciated. Reservations were expressed about the excessive amount of homework set before national tests and the provision for French. Inspection findings support the comments about homework for seven-year olds, but it was not possible to view French lessons.
- 5.8 Parents are given plenty of information about the school. New parents are especially well catered for, and receive a comprehensive welcome pack and other information. Each September, parents are sent a booklet with expectations about the year ahead, and they receive weekly newsletters concerning the school and the pupils' achievements. These, together with meetings regarding the transition from Year 2 to 3, and the examinations for entry to secondary schools, keep parents very well informed. In addition, parents are invited to discuss their children's progress each term with the form teacher and to discuss suitable secondary schools for their children with the headmistress. The written reports received by parents twice a year vary in quality; some have perceptive comments regarding a child's abilities and progress in each subject but a significant number of others are the same for different pupils without any reference to individual characteristics.
- 5.9 Each class has a parent elected to represent them, who raises concerns with the senior management; most parents feel this liaison channel with the school works well. The parents association organizes successful social events, which help with fundraising. Parents have easy access to staff, and are appreciative of the prompt and professional response they receive. Parental complaints are rare, and the details are recorded carefully. Opportunities exist for parents to help the school, for example, by accompanying pupils on outings, making play costumes and helping with make-up.

**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 effectiveness of the EYFS is excellent, enabling children to make outstanding progress. The good and often outstanding teaching challenges and stimulates each child, enthusing them to learn. The caring environment and strong support of staff provide children with a warm, secure start to their education; these young ones also appreciate the help of older pupils in the school who are always ready to assist them. Throughout the setting a strong commitment exists to maintain the present high standards and to search for improvement through self-evaluation.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are excellent. All staff are checked appropriately and safeguarding is enhanced by comprehensive policies and thorough risk assessments. Continuous classroom observation and assessment, allied to photographic records of each child's progress, illustrate the diligence of staff and their desire to search for improvements. The setting works closely with parents and welcomes outside advisors; staff also liaise with neighbouring schools over educational matters. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated that they were very happy with the EYFS education; they provide valuable support, especially during preparations for school productions, making costumes and helping with make-up. Classrooms are bright and cheerful, and high quality resources are used effectively to assist children's learning.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is excellent. Teachers are experienced and dedicated to bringing the best out of the children; planning is detailed, and assessment is used to indicate where a change of emphasis is required. Children's health, safety and well-being are supported through the consistent and intelligent implementation of the setting's procedures and practices. The highly skilled staff know the children well and take every opportunity to promote their learning. Questions and carefully chosen resources create challenging and stimulating situations in which to learn. For instance, during a Reception session, a range of two-dimensional shapes were used by children to distinguish between straight and curved sides and thus to classify shapes by their properties. Children play in the outdoor area, but opportunities for older EYFS children to initiate their own learning in this environment are limited.

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

- 6.4 All children achieve well, and for many the outcomes are excellent. Most children exceed the Early Learning goals well before the end of the EYFS. Their social and communication skills are well developed. Nursery children make marks in their play and those in Reception use their knowledge of phonics to read sentences such as 'don't fly kites near power lines'. They listen keenly, answer questions enthusiastically and accurately, and have the confidence to make sensible guesses. Staff are effective in raising children's self-esteem, confidence and independence, treating each child as a valued individual. The children have an increasingly clear understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and, with support, they practise and understand the need for hygiene. Children are friendly and courteous, and all are eager to learn and to fulfil small responsibilities and tasks for the class, such as changing the date on the board and taking the register to the office. The children derive much satisfaction and pleasure from their experiences and achievements.

**What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**



## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a trustee, 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 David Defoe

Mrs Eileen Parris

Mr Ian Sterling

Mrs Jenny Clayphan

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)

Team Inspector (Head, ISA junior school)

Co-ordinating Inspector (EYFS)