

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

FONTHILL LODGE SCHOOL

by the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

11th – 14th June 2007

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Fonthill Lodge School

Full Name of the School	Fonthill Lodge School
DfES Number	938/6218
Registered Charity Number	325071
Address	Coombe Hill Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4LY.
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Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Neal
Chair of Governors	Mr Peter Cockburn
Age Range	2 – 11 years
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	11th – 14th June 2007

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Fonthill Lodge School is a co-educational day preparatory school catering for pupils aged two to eleven. It was founded by the Reverend George Radcliffe in Salisbury. In 1839 the school moved to Fonthill Gifford and then to just outside East Grinstead in West Sussex, on the borders of East Sussex and Surrey, where it remains. From 1922 until 1963 it was run by The Reverend and Mrs Walpole Sealy whose daughter established the Fonthill School Trust in 1974. The Trust established the current school in the preparatory section of the original school. Pupils attend the school from an area extending to a distance of some 15 miles, and come largely from families with professional backgrounds.
- 1.2 One-hundred-and-seventy-six pupils attend the school, of whom thirty attend on a part-time basis. Fifty-two children are in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) of whom twenty-eight are boys and twenty-four are girls. Forty-four pupils are in Years 1 and 2, twenty-four boys and twenty girls. Eighty pupils, forty-one boys and thirty-nine girls, are in Years 3 to 6.
- 1.3 The school seeks to provide a caring, secure, inclusive and happy learning environment. Emphasis is placed on enabling pupils to become good all-rounders and to achieve the highest standard of which they are capable so that they can enter the senior school of their choice. Great importance is given to the development of confident, self-motivated and responsible pupils. To fully achieve these aims, staff place emphasis on the provision of a broad and interesting curriculum, which encourages the performing arts and science as well as literacy and numeracy. The school seeks to provide an ethos to encourage life-long learning where pupils think for themselves.
- 1.4 Children entering the Foundation Stage are assessed informally in order to check that they have the potential to thrive in the school's learning environment. Children who enter other year groups are assessed to ensure that the school can meet their needs.
- 1.5 Standardised tests indicate that pupils show a wide range of abilities and that their average ability is above the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results in national tests will be above the national average for all maintained primary schools.
- 1.6 Seventeen pupils have been identified by the school as having a degree of learning difficulty and requiring extra support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. A few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. These pupils are generally confident in speaking English and do not have extra support in this area.
- 1.7 Since the last inspection a new nursery has been built. Boys and girls are now taught together in all year groups. The headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

- 1.8 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 table.

School	NC name
Raindrops	Pre-Nursery
Rainbow	Nursery
Orange	Reception
Blue	Year 1
Year 2	Year 2
Year 3	Year 3
Year 4	Year 4
Year 5	Year 5
Year 6	Year 6

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 Pupils enjoy a broad educational experience which is varied and interesting, and is well suited to their ages and aptitudes. The curriculum strongly reflects the school's aim to prepare pupils for entry to their senior schools and to prepare them for lifelong learning. The experience provided has a positive effect on their aesthetic, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, creative and physical development. It also enables pupils to reach the academic standards required for entry to the senior schools of their choice. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated that they were very pleased with the range of experiences provided for their children. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, particularly for the under-fives, and greater emphasis is given to practical work and investigation. Nevertheless, the school recognises the need to improve the quality of timetabling.
- 2.2 The curriculum is planned effectively and schemes of work are detailed and thorough. It provides pupils with a secure foundation in English and mathematics, but not at the expense of their aesthetic and creative development. The science curriculum encourages practical work and investigations and pays particular attention to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of issues concerned with ecology and sustainability. However, the organisation of the timetable does not make the best use of the time available. For example, considerable time is allocated to swimming to allow for travel to the swimming pool.
- 2.3 Teachers emphasise the essential skills of speaking and listening, as well as developing the skills particular to each subject. Pupils successfully prepare for examinations organised by the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Care is taken to ensure that pupils develop useful skills in information and communication technology (ICT) which they apply in other subjects as a result of careful planning. For example, pupils use their ICT skills in science when they examine soils under a powerful microscope attached to a computer.
- 2.4 In line with its aims, ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to participate fully in all the activities is at the centre of the school's purpose. More able pupils are suitably challenged, for example in mathematics where pupils enter national and local mathematical competitions. Care is taken to support those pupils the school has identified as having a special talent, for example in music or in chess.
- 2.5 The school provides good support for any pupil with a statement of special educational needs and for other pupils with learning difficulties, both in lessons and, on occasion, during individual and group sessions with a specialist teacher. At the moment, these arrangements lack careful oversight to ensure that disruption to lessons is kept to a minimum. The few pupils with English as an additional language are generally confident with spoken and written English and teachers take care to ensure they are fully involved in lessons and activities.
- 2.6 The school prepares pupils carefully for their move to senior schools, particularly in respect of the examinations they have to take. Preparation for the move to senior schools is of good quality, especially in the preparation for external examinations. Teachers know their pupils very well and this information is used to good effect to help pupils and parents in choosing their senior schools and meeting the necessary requirements. Pupils in Year 6 appreciated the support they had been given.

- 2.7 Pupils' educational experience is complemented by a range of educational visits, including an exchange visit to Lille, and by a programme of extra-curricular activities that are extensive for a school of this size. Pupils speak highly of these activities which are well attended. The range is considerable and includes creative and sporting activities, a successful chess club and a very active science club. An extensive range of musical activities includes a singing club, as well as two choirs, a mixed ensemble and other groups.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 The school achieves its aim that pupils should experience success in the subjects they learn and in other aspects of the educational provision made for them. Pupils are securely grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding, and learn to use them effectively. They achieve good standards in relation to their abilities. The results of national tests in Year 2 over the past three years show that standards overall in reading, writing and mathematics have been far above the national averages for maintained primary schools. In Year 6, standards in national tests over the same period have been well above the national average for maintained primary schools in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 showed high standards in mathematics. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have made good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive and achieve good standards. They attain, and often exceed, the nationally recommended levels for children of that age. The strengths reported in the last inspection have been maintained.
- 2.10 When pupils leave for their senior school, they have achieved well in all areas of education provided by the school. They are good 'all rounders', very much in line with the school's aims. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. The more able pupils also achieve well, which is reflected in the scholarships gained to senior schools. Pupils with a particular talent are encouraged and are successful, for example, in music and drama. In chess, the girls' team are under 11 national champions and the school has produced an under 11 national rapid chess champion. In sport, the school holds its own. Particularly noteworthy is the Eco Schools Green Flag award for the work of the school's 'eco committee', as well as the Royal Society awards for science projects.
- 2.11 Pupils' learning skills are well developed. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and work hard in response to encouraging teaching and interesting lessons and activities. The school's ethos encourages pupils to do their best. Pupils show considerable skills in speaking and listening. In lessons, they usually listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other. They show confidence in arguing their point, for example in a discussion about whether whales should be hunted. Across the school, pupils read fluently for their ages and abilities. They write at length, accurately and fluently for a wide range of purposes and in an appropriate range of styles from poetry to accounts of visits or of experiments.
- 2.12 Pupils attain high standards in numeracy. Pupils in Year 2 doubled numbers rapidly and accurately, while Year 6 pupils investigated competently complex numerical patterns. They use their mathematical skills readily across the curriculum, for example in science, geography and history. Pupils employ their sound ICT skills to good effect when they use a computer to make presentations or to record their music making.
- 2.13 Pupils settle quickly in lessons and activities and concentrate well. Occasionally, some lose their concentration in a small minority of lessons where the pace of teaching slows. Pupils

comment that they find lessons interesting and that “teachers always help when we ask.” Pupils work well on their own and, when given the opportunity they collaborate effectively, for example when they use ICT or when they carry out a science experiment. They take great delight in explaining their ideas and thinking for themselves: Year 3 pupils, for example, adopted different points of view in a lively discussion about a Viking raid on Lindesfarne Abbey.

- 2.14 Pupils work independently and undertake research when given the opportunity. For example, pupils in Year 6 have successfully undertaken research about Gothic art, as well as producing detailed portfolios of the work of the artist Bridget Riley. Pupils in other classes have produced studies of volcanoes and of the work of Monet. However, not all pupils undertake such research as opportunities are not provided consistently across the school. The formation of a ‘Rock Band’, which hopes to perform its own music, is a striking example of pupils’ willingness to use their initiative.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.15 Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school’s values are evident in all aspects of its work. The school’s commitment to achieving its aims for pupils’ personal development is well met. The strengths reported in the last inspection have been fully maintained.
- 2.16 Pupils have a strong spiritual awareness. An atmosphere of respect and care for each other is present throughout the school. For example, a young pupil was most concerned when he thought that a member of his class was missing. Teachers value each pupil as an individual so that pupils have positive self-esteem and a good sense of identity. Tolerance and respect for different faiths are a key feature of the school’s provision and provide the theme for many assemblies. In assemblies, pupils explore Christian values and beliefs as well as those of other world faiths. Pupils benefit considerably from a period of reflection during an assembly when they are encouraged to include families, friends and any other pressing issues in their prayers. Visits to places of worship, including a local church and a synagogue in Brighton also serve to enhance pupils’ understanding of other beliefs.
- 2.17 Pupils have a very secure sense of what is right and wrong, not just in terms of obeying rules but also in doing what is right. The school’s clear commitment to sustainability is strongly and effectively promoted by the ‘eco committee’, so that this issue is firmly embedded in the daily life of the school. Behaving morally and justly is part of the way of life of the school and is seen in the high levels of courtesy shown by pupils to each other and to adults. When talking to inspectors, pupils explained that the rules were fair and were for their benefit. Staff provide good role models in their relationships with pupils and with each other. Pupils regularly support national and local charities.
- 2.18 Pupils show a high degree of social awareness from the youngest age. Children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to take account of others by sharing resources and taking turns. Pupils behave responsibly; for example, they return to their classrooms at the end of breaks from all parts of the extensive grounds promptly. The newly revised house system is seen by pupils as a positive development. More opportunities are being provided within the house system for pupils to take responsibilities and those who already have a responsibility undertake it conscientiously. The ‘eco committee’ is thriving and has representatives from each class, as well as teachers and a governor; it is chaired by a pupil. In meetings, pupils make their views known and abide by the decision of the majority. Such experiences develop

their understanding of what it means to be a citizen. The regular annual residential visits, especially the team building visits to Lodge Hill contribute to pupils' social awareness and development.

- 2.19 Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities provided for their cultural development. The attention given to the performing arts, such as music and drama leads to pupils gaining considerable success in these areas. Pupils learn about cultures other than their own. The recent 'Discovery' week, with its focus on Asia, enabled pupils to meet people from Japan as well as learning a great deal about other cultures from that continent. Children in the Foundation Stage, for example, now use aspects of the Tai Chi they had seen as part of their warm up in a physical development session. Older pupils gain greatly from the exchange visits to a school in Lille. In addition, links with schools in Ghana, Rwanda, and with an Inuit community, further their cultural understanding.
- 2.20 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.21 Strong teaching is reflected in pupils' good levels of achievement and their success in gaining places at senior schools of their choice. Teaching is good across the whole school and a significant proportion of the teaching is excellent. Teaching usually enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress in acquiring new knowledge, increasing their understanding and in developing their skills. In a small minority of lessons, the pace slows and pupils do not progress as well as they usually do. The overall good quality of the assessment of pupils' completed work underpins the quality of the teaching. Assessment is now better used to monitor the pupils' progress and to measure the school's performance. The strengths in teaching reported at the last inspection have been maintained and are underpinned by the good quality of assessment which is now better used to monitor pupils' progress and to measure the school's performance.
- 2.22 Teaching encourages pupils to make the best of their intellectual, physical and creative talents. It takes place in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between pupils which enhances learning. A significant strength in the teaching is the keenness of teachers and other adults to enable pupils to do well. Pupils are given useful opportunities to think for themselves and to increase their understanding.
- 2.23 Where teaching is most successful, teachers ensure that there is a very close match between the work provided and pupils' differing abilities and they provide interesting and relevant opportunities for them to undertake investigative work. Year 6 pupils undertook thorough investigations of numerical patterns and relationships, for example with 'magic' triangles and multiplication pyramids. Such teaching is an improvement since the last inspection. On occasion, inspirational teaching, for example in drama, captures pupils' imagination and they become totally absorbed with what they are doing. Collaborative teaching when two teachers work together with one larger group of pupils is also used successfully and produced very good results in a lesson in Year 4 where pupils were learning how to write a reasoned case for and against the practice of hunting whales.
- 2.24 Teachers know their pupils well and make effective use of the favourable class sizes. Planning for lessons takes due account of pupils' needs and their previous learning. Teachers are hard working and conscientious and have a secure command of the subjects they teach.

In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

- 2.25 Across the school, a brisk pace and the effective use of time enables pupils to make good progress. In a small minority of lessons, when the pace is less demanding, pupils lose their concentration and their progress slows as a consequence. Teachers make effective use of the good quality resources, including ICT and the library, and pupils' learning benefits. For example, in a discussion about whale hunting, an email from an Inuit community outlining their views on the issue made a strong impression on the pupils. Pupils appreciate the effective use of interactive whiteboards which, they say, have a strong impact and help them to learn. Teachers hold high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the excellent behaviour in the school is regarded by teachers and pupils alike as the norm.
- 2.26 Comprehensive support is provided for pupils with statements of special educational needs, and those with learning difficulties, in lessons by the teachers and well-deployed teaching assistants, and where necessary with a specialist teacher. Where needed, detailed individual education plans have been written and due account of these is taken by the class teachers. Good attention is paid to ensuring that the needs of pupils the school has identified as being more able are met, especially in mathematics, where at times these pupils are taught in classes according to pupils' abilities.
- 2.27 Teachers regularly and accurately assess their pupils' work. In the Foundation Stage, teachers frequently make, and record, assessments of their children's progress, using the national Foundation Stage Profile. Elsewhere the school uses a wide range of assessments, including the national tests in Years 2 and 6, to compare pupils' attainment against national norms. It analyses the results of national tests, and other national data, to track individual pupils' progress and to set targets for them to reach, and to gauge the effectiveness of the school's performance. The information is also used to guide curricular and lesson planning. In science and mathematics, pupils have useful opportunities to assess their own progress.
- 2.28 Teachers' marking is conscientious and provides pupils with praise and encouragement. Teachers have a detailed marking policy, which indicates how work is to be marked and how pupils should be informed as to what they need to do to improve their work, but the policy is not fully implemented. Consequently, not all pupils are given clear guidance in the marking which helps them to improve their work.
- 2.29 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care is excellent. The care that staff give to the well-being of their pupils is a strength of the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Sound attention is given to the health and safety of pupils. The school is successful in its aim to provide a caring and happy learning environment, in which all pupils are valued. Pupils described the school as being “friendly” and “like a family.” Parents very much value this aspect of the school’s work. The quality of care provided is fully supportive of the national Every Child Matters agenda.
- 3.2 The atmosphere in the school is caring and purposeful, with teachers and pupils keen to help each other. An ethos of mutual respect underpins the school’s work. Relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are excellent. Teachers and pupils enjoy being in each other’s company. The commitment of class teachers to the well-being and happiness of the pupils is at the heart of the excellent pastoral care. They are well supported by the key stage co-ordinators and the other members of the senior leadership team, particularly the senior master. Pupils feel secure and report that teachers are always ready to support them. A pupil with learning difficulties commented: “I am not afraid to ask if I don’t understand. My teacher is really kind and always helps me.”
- 3.3 Teachers are also supported by clear and well-organised pastoral arrangements. Staff are familiar with the school’s policies and procedures and ensure that these are fully implemented. The recent revision of the house system to further support pastoral care is much appreciated by pupils who are investigating the local National Trust properties after which their houses have been named.
- 3.4 Effective arrangements are in place and implemented to promote good behaviour. These are known and respected by pupils who regard them as being fair: “they are to help us” commented one pupil. The school is conscientious and thorough in the attention it pays to the prevention of bullying. The anti-bullying policy is clear and is implemented very effectively. When inspectors raised the question of bullying in their meetings with pupils, many of them were surprised that anyone could think that bullying might be an issue for them. Pupils readily indicated that they would be willing to confide in an adult should they be experiencing difficulties and that any issue would be dealt with swiftly and comprehensively.
- 3.5 Arrangements to promote and safeguard pupils’ welfare, health and safety are secure. Attendance and admission registers are completed correctly and the school makes prompt checks should a pupil be absent without an explanation. Fire risk assessments are up to date and protection is thorough; appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly and logged. First aid is well provided for in terms of the number of appropriately trained personnel but the accommodation for pupils who need medical attention is inadequate. Care is provided for pupils before and after school; this was not observed during the inspection. The school has not registered this care with Ofsted as is required. Risk assessments for educational visits are comprehensive and the school carries out annual checks on electrical equipment. Conscientious attention is given to child protection. The headteacher has undertaken a full and detailed review of all procedures and policies and has fully discussed the outcomes with the governors.

- 3.6 The recently revised child protection policy is very detailed and thorough. Plans are in hand for all staff to have a thorough briefing on the new arrangements at a training day to be held at the start of next term. Staff have received training on child protection and inter-agency working, but the designated person for child protection is awaiting training. Criminal Records Bureau checks have been made on all adults and are intrinsic to the school's recruitment arrangements. The school has established a central record of all checks it makes when recruiting staff.
- 3.7 The encouragement of healthy living has a high priority. Emphasis is placed in science and physical education on developing healthy lifestyles. Pupils have considerable opportunities to take exercise and are encouraged to do so. Food is nutritious and appetising and teachers and kitchen staff oversee what pupils have to eat. Due attention is paid to teaching pupils about the dangers of smoking and the misuse of drugs.
- 3.8 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that the designated person for child protection has received training in inter-agency procedures [Regulation 3.(2)(b)].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.9 The school has an effective partnership with parents, who are very supportive of its aims and value the useful links they have with it. Excellent links have been developed with the local and wider community. The strengths reported at the last inspection have been maintained and the links with the wider community have improved, all to the benefit of the pupils.
- 3.10 Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate a high level of satisfaction with the education their children receive. They appreciate particularly the attitudes and values the school promotes, the quality of teaching, the range of subjects taught, and the extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence confirms parents' positive views. A small minority of those who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concerns about the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties. Inspectors found that the support for these pupils is good.
- 3.11 Useful opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in the work of the school. They have contributed significantly to the organisation of the library and they accompany pupils on educational visits. The active Friends of Fonthill Lodge association is open to all parents and supports the school through its organisation of social and fundraising events. The Friends have a representative in each class to enable newcomers to settle quickly.
- 3.12 Parents are provided with a wide range of helpful information which keeps them well informed: a comprehensive prospectus; informative, weekly newsletters; an events diary, posted on the school's web site. The school organises workshops for parents about aspects of the curriculum, such a recent one about children's creative development in the Reception class. The school's self-review indicates that providing parents with information about the work of the school is an area for development.
- 3.13 Regular reports on their children's achievement and progress are sent to all parents, who acknowledge them as being useful. At times, the reports' description of the work covered by pupils is at the expense of judgments about progress and what pupils need to do to improve. Parents see parental consultation evenings as being helpful. Parents of pupils with learning

difficulties are kept well informed about the provision being made for their children. Parents of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are fully involved in the reviews of the provision being made.

- 3.14 The small number of parental concerns are handled with due care. A considerable majority of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that the school had handled any concerns appropriately. The headteacher and staff are readily accessible, creating an atmosphere in which parents are made to feel welcome. Parents especially appreciate being able to talk with teachers briefly at the start of the school day. As a result, most concerns are dealt with informally. If this is not possible, parents have access to a recently updated and comprehensive complaints procedure, which has not so far been invoked.
- 3.15 The school has developed excellent links with the local and international community. The school has a well-developed approach to ecological issues in partnership with the Royal Society, a local nano-technology firm, and a wild life centre. Strong links have been developed with a local sports club to the benefit of the school and club alike. The school regularly participates in local sporting events. The choir sings in local homes for elderly people. The school supports local and national charities. Local organisations regularly use the school's facilities.
- 3.16 The school's international links are a particular strength. A residential exchange with a school in Lille has enabled pupils to experience another country at first hand. Links with a school in Rwanda have helped that school to build more classrooms and further links have been established with a school in Ghana. More recently, with parental assistance, links have been developed with Inuit people living in the Hudson area in Canada. The range and extent of links with the community contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development.
- 3.17 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The pupils at Fonthill Lodge benefit from a good quality education sustained by sound governance. Governors have identified the need to improve their knowledge of the working of the school. The structure of the governing body is well suited to ensure effective oversight of the necessary tasks of financial planning and the provision of good resources, both in terms of accommodation and personnel. Members of the governing body offer a wide variety of relevant skills and expertise to the school and collectively have a very good understanding of the ethos and history of the school. The governing body is strongly committed to its role to secure the school's aims. It is aware of its responsibilities, particularly in the areas of child protection and health and safety. Governors are very supportive of the school.
- 4.2 Prudent financial planning ensures that the school is on a sound footing and that the resources provided continue to improve and are of a good quality. The building of new accommodation for younger pupils and the provision of good resources for staff and pupils are testament to this planning. Governors have a secure knowledge of where the future development of the school lies in terms of the development of the accommodation and the recruitment of pupils.
- 4.3 Governors do not collectively have a sufficiently detailed knowledge of the working of the school, for example in curriculum matters. Governors are aware that this is an area for development and have already nominated one of their number as a member of the health and safety committee. The governors are becoming increasingly effective in supporting the headteacher in the development of a long-term strategic educational plan for the school.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 Those with leadership and management responsibilities ensure that the school's aims are met successfully. The headteacher is seeking to extend the opportunities for staff to have responsibilities for leadership and management and a new management structure is being developed. Currently roles and responsibilities are not sufficiently clear within the management structure. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
- 4.5 The headteacher provides very good leadership. In this she is ably supported by the deputy head who has a very good understanding of the school. She has gained the confidence of the hardworking and conscientious staff. Together they have successfully undertaken a detailed review of the school's work and have clearly identified where the strengths and areas for improvement lie. Subject leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within their own subjects and have developed detailed schemes of work. Those staff with responsibility for the oversight of sections of the school lead and manage their teams competently. The management of support for those with learning difficulties is effective.
- 4.6 Nevertheless, the role and responsibility of middle managers for ensuring that policies and decisions are effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated are not well defined and job descriptions are not precise enough in this regard. As a result, inconsistencies remain, for example, in marking and in report writing.

- 4.7 Staff in management positions are enthusiastic about improving the school and work well together but place too much reliance on informal monitoring to ensure that policies are being implemented. The school development plan which is now being constructed is based on the outcomes of the major review of the school. The proposed structure is detailed and thorough. Much has been done by the headteacher and bursar to ensure that the school fulfils its statutory obligations. Staff development is good. Essential training for teaching and non-teaching staff in areas such as child protection and first aid has been undertaken as well as a wide range of more individual specialist training. Effective arrangements are in place to induct newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school. Teacher appraisal is securely in place but is temporally in abeyance due to the appointment of the new headteacher.
- 4.8 The prudent management of finances by the governors and bursar ensures that resources are sufficient for the curriculum and that the accommodation is in a good state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Teachers are well deployed and are sufficient to meet the aims of the school. The well-organised ICT structure giving all staff access to all the school's documentation is a significant factor in the efficient administration of the school.
- 4.9 The grounds are a major asset and are used to very good effect. Pupils take great pleasure in using the grounds at break times, especially in building camps in which they play. Such activities contribute considerably to pupils' personal development, especially their creative and imaginative development. Good facilities are provided for the pupils' sporting activities. Imaginative use has been made of the grounds to further the school's 'eco' agenda, for example through the well-constructed and informative nature trail, pond and garden.
- 4.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4].
- 4.11 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 5]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill [Regulation 5.(1)].
- 4.12 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school is effective in meeting its aim to create a caring, inclusive and happy learning community in which pupils succeed academically and in their personal development. Both pupils and their parents think highly of the school. Pastoral care is outstanding, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum and an extensive range of educational activities, though the timetable does not make the best use of the time available for teaching. Good quality teaching enables all pupils, including the most able and those with learning difficulties, to achieve well not only in academic subjects but in activities such as music drama and chess. The headteacher, who has almost completed her first year in the school, provides very good leadership and management. Aply supported by the deputy head, she has involved all the staff in a detailed evaluation of the school and plans are being drawn up to make the improvements that have been identified as being necessary to take the school forward. The empowerment of more staff in the management of the school is seen as being central to development. The current arrangements lack clarity over roles and responsibilities, which lead at times to inconsistency in the implementation and monitoring of agreed policies. Governors provide very good investment in human and material resources and are very supportive of the school. However, they do not have a detailed insight to the working of the school. The continuing success of the school is due to the support of the governors, the lively leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of staff arising from their greater involvement in determining priorities for development.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, the school has made significant progress. The accommodation for the younger children has improved considerably with the construction of a new building. Pupils take more responsibility for their own learning and have more opportunities for practical and investigative work, for example in science, the emphasis on sustainability and ecological issues has been recognised nationally.
- 5.3 The school complies with almost all of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present meet Standards 3 (welfare, health and safety of pupils) and 5 (premises and accommodation).

Next Steps

- 5.4 In order to build on the improvement since the last inspection, the school should:
1. complete the establishment of an effective management structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the implementation and monitoring of policies and the evaluation of the work of the school;
 2. improve the timetable to make the best use of the time available and to minimise the disruptions to pupils' learning caused when pupils are withdrawn from lessons for a range of activities.
 3. The governors should establish arrangements to give them good insight into the working of the school.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) ensure that the designated person for child protection has received training in inter-agency procedures [Regulation 3.(2)(b)];
 - (2) ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill [Regulation 5.(1)].

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 11th - 14th June 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff, with governors, and with parents, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr Rod Sharman	Reporting Inspector
Mr Malcolm Gough	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Mrs Susan West	Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school
Mr Brian Wigglesworth	Former Head, ISA school