



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**RICKMANSWORTH PNEU SCHOOL**

**(From July 2011: CHARLOTTE HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL)**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Rickmansworth PNEU School

Full Name of School/College **Rickmansworth PNEU School**  
DfE Number **919/6126**  
Registered Charity Number **311075**  
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Email Address **s.gillam@charlottehouseprepschool.co.uk**  
Head **Mrs Susan J Hayes**  
Chair of Governors **Ms Catriona Smith**  
Age Range **3 to 11**  
Total Number of Pupils **118**  
Gender of Pupils **Girls**  
Numbers by Age 3-5 (EYFS): **29** 5-11: **89**  
Head of EYFS Setting **Miss Hannah Cowen**  
EYFS Gender **Girls**  
Inspection dates **17 May 2011 to 18 May 2011  
15 Jun 2011 to 17 Jun 2011**

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in June, 2005.

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

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

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

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

- (i) The 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 Rickmansworth PNEU School is a day school for girls aged from three to eleven. It was founded in 1931 by Miss Kitching along the principles of the PNEU (Parents National Educational Union) movement in which the girls are educated alongside the school's strong relationship with the parent body. It became an educational trust with a board of governors in 1967. Past and present parents make up the majority of the governing body of ten. The school is situated in an urban street on the edge of Rickmansworth, with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) on the same site. Since the previous inspection a new head has been appointed, the management structure widened and new art, science and music rooms have been added.
- 1.2 Currently 118 girls are in the school. In the junior school 29 children are in the EYFS and 27 in Years 1 and 2. The senior school has 62 girls in Years 3 to 6. Pupils come from a radius of about ten miles from the school and are mainly from professional backgrounds. Entry is at any age, subject to a satisfactory informal assessment. At age eleven they transfer to a variety of local independent or maintained schools and occasionally to boarding schools. In recent years all girls have gained places at their schools of choice.
- 1.3 The school carries out a range of ability tests. These indicate that the ability of pupils is above the national average with a wide spread of abilities represented. The school has identified 15 girls with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) who receive additional support. None has a statement of special educational needs. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 The school's ethos is that of the founder of the PNEU movement, Charlotte Mason. Within a Christian foundation it works with parents to provide a happy, caring atmosphere within which each child can flourish as an individual and a member of the community. It aims to provide a broad and challenging curriculum, tailored to the needs of each individual, so that each can realise her potential and make progress. Pupils are encouraged to live happily together, to be responsible for all aspects of school life and to show concern for each other and the wider community.
- 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 Rickmansworth PNEU School is highly successful in providing an education for its pupils that ensures that they leave the school as confident, well-rounded girls who gain places at their senior school of choice. An outstanding foundation is given in the EYFS and the girls continue to make swift progress so that they reach good standards when they leave. Attitudes to learning are excellent, based on good behaviour and a real interest in learning. A broad, well-planned curriculum provides a sound basis for learning and is enhanced by a choice of extra-curricular activities and a wide range of educational visits. Mostly good and often excellent teaching results in good learning. Pupils needing learning support and those with EAL are given appropriate support, although individual education plans have insufficient detail in the targets and extension work for more able pupils does not always provide sufficient challenge. Strengths of the teaching are in the carefully chosen activities that stimulate interest and successfully encourage pupils' independent learning and reasoning.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. The girls have a thorough understanding of right and wrong with clear beliefs in how they should treat others. They are confident and have high self-esteem. They play a full role in their school community and show concern for the wider community. Their cultural development is strong. Excellent pastoral care provides a nurturing environment for their personal development. Relationships between all members of the school community are exemplary. The school is diligent in ensuring that policies are kept up to date and practice for safeguarding and health and safety are good overall. In interviews and pre-inspection questionnaires pupils say that they are very happy and feel secure and well cared for. Some reported that the school does not listen to their views or that teachers are not fair in their treatment of them. Inspection findings did not agree with their comments.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent and leadership and management are good, both working well together. All recommendations made in the previous inspection report have been met. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and fulfil their statutory roles effectively. Leadership at all levels has a clear vision of where to move the school towards. Good procedures are used to monitor the curriculum, teaching and standards but their effectiveness between subjects is variable. Staff are well supported through appraisal and training programmes. Regulatory procedures, including safeguarding are thorough. A very small number of peripatetic staff did not have medical certification on the first visit but the school acted very swiftly to immediately rectify this. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed overwhelming satisfaction with the school in all areas. Relationships between the school and parents are excellent.

## **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:
- carry out appropriate checks on medical fitness for all peripatetic staff [Part 4, paragraph 19(2)(b)(ii) and (3), under the Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors].
- 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.

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

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Extend the challenge in extension tasks and provide more precise details in target setting so that pupils of all abilities can further develop their thinking skills and learning.
  2. Develop subject monitoring so that it is more rigorous in all areas and the outcomes are actioned fully.
  3. Extend opportunities in the EYFS to inform parents of how they can be involved in their children's learning in all six areas of the curriculum

### **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 quality of pupils' overall achievement and their learning is good. They achieve high standards and make swift progress in line with the aims of the school to help them all reach their potential. As a result in recent years all pupils have gained places at their senior school of choice.
- 3.2 By the end of the junior school the pupils read and write well. At all ages they listen carefully and are articulate. Their writing is imaginative, thoughtful and reflective and shows their good understanding and application of English grammar. In mathematics they have a considerable grasp of basic concepts and this understanding helps them to problem solve competently. They enjoy their 'mathletics' sessions and, as a result, their mathematical understanding and mental arithmetic skills improve further. They apply mathematics well in subjects such as science. Standards of information and communication technology (ICT) are high and this is used effectively for research in many subjects. They have competent practical skills that are applied proficiently in science experiments and design and technology (DT) constructions. High levels of creativity are reflected in their art, poetry and drama. Their physical skills are good, reflected in their good achievements in swimming, netball and gymnastics. Girls are successful in inter-school science and French speaking competitions. Choirs and drama productions are of high quality and are well presented.
- 3.3 Results over the last three years in national tests at the age of eleven have been far above the national average for maintained primary schools. Overall, pupils' achievement in English in the tests has been slightly higher than in mathematics or science. The school no longer takes the national tests. Results of thorough internal assessment tests, including optional National Curriculum tests, and the scrutiny of samples of pupils' written work confirm that high standards are being maintained.
- 3.4 The level of attainment in National Curriculum tests indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) make good progress. For example, younger pupils can articulate their learning, as when they correctly describe the sequence in life cycles, and older pupils' writing and mathematical skills show considerable progress over time. Gifted and talented pupils also make good progress and some reach higher than expected levels in assessments.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are highly motivated, work together co-operatively and take pride in the presentation of their work. They are good independent learners, use their initiative and carry out research competently. Their well-developed reasoning skills are exemplified by their critical writing in English and religious education (RE) and their logical thinking when making predictions and conclusions in science experiments. The obvious enjoyment of learning and pupils' good behaviour have a very positive effect on the standards they achieve and the progress they make.



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

- 3.6 A good curriculum and wide variety of extra-curricular provision give strong support to pupils' learning. The aims of the school are met successfully by tailoring the curriculum to individual pupils' needs and providing suitable challenge. The timetable has been altered to give better balance to the curriculum and more extra-curricular activities are now offered, as recommended by the previous inspection report.
- 3.7 A broad curriculum, suitable for different ages and abilities, contains all subjects in the National Curriculum, with the exception of DT. Girls learn French and personal, social and health education (PSHE) from Reception. RE and drama are taught from Year 1 and Latin is introduced in Year 5. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music, French and physical education (PE). The life skills programme, taught from Year 3, introduces a variety of skills into the curriculum, including food technology and some DT, but pupils do not have the benefit of continuous DT through the school. A suitable curriculum for games is devised in which the school uses its limited outdoor facilities well. Pupils go by bus to a local swimming pool and from Year 4 they use the sports facilities at a nearby school once a week. Events such as the mathematics challenge and art days provide worthwhile breadth and challenge to the curriculum.
- 3.8 Schemes of work in all subjects are thorough and often include beneficial cross-curricular links. Provision is made for pupils of differing abilities in planning, including suitable support for LDD pupils and extension tasks for the more able. Planning is carefully monitored so that the curriculum provides good continuity from year to year and pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education. Year 6 pupils say that they are very well prepared for their senior schools.
- 3.9 A variety of extra-curricular activities, visits and links with the community enhance the curriculum. A beneficial range of visits related to the curriculum is carefully planned for each year group. This includes residential trips for French, history, art and environmental sciences and outdoor activities from Year 4. Extra-curricular activities are available from Year 1 and are mainly related to sport and music but also include activities such as sign language, gardening club and tae kwon do. Pupils say that they enjoy these clubs but some would like a wider choice. Further enhancement to the curriculum is provided by links to the local community when pupils sing carols to raise money outside a local store or visit a centre for the blind to read and sing to residents.

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

- 3.10 Teaching is good overall and contributes strongly to the quality of pupils' learning and achievements. It successfully fulfils the school's aims of providing for the needs of each child so that all make good progress. Following recommendations from the previous inspection, assessment procedures have been extended substantially in order to monitor each girl's progress.
- 3.11 The majority of teaching is good or better and sometimes exemplary. In the most successful lessons teachers' knowledge is thorough, objectives are clear, the pace is brisk, challenge high, and worthwhile support is provided for all abilities. Lessons are carefully planned to provide a variety of activities that maintain pupils' interest, encourage good behaviour and develop reasoning and independent learning.

Questioning is used effectively to extend understanding as well as to assess knowledge. Teachers generally have high expectations and use praise to encourage and help. In the few less successful lessons little challenge is provided and the pace is slow so that pupils lose focus or teachers fail to curb the over-enthusiasm of a few girls and, as a result, quieter ones become less involved.

- 3.12 Teachers know the pupils well and plan effectively for different needs. Pupils with LDD are well supported by work that is carefully targeted to their ability and also have individual lessons. Individual education plans are produced which identify the needs of pupils effectively but give insufficient detail for achieving the targets within them. Extension tasks are often set for faster-working pupils and the more able but these do not always extend the breadth of learning or offer sufficient challenge to promote thinking or problem-solving skills for the most able. Resources, including a well-stocked library and specialist accommodation for science, art and PE are used effectively to promote learning. Good use of interactive whiteboards occurs in some lessons although overall these were under-used during the inspection. ICT is used well to develop independent learning and support subjects.
- 3.13 Marking of pupils' work is good overall. It is frequent, careful and encouraging. House points reward effort and are eagerly sought, and excellent attainment is commended in a special assembly. Targets are given in English, mathematics and science and comments on pupils' work may sometimes give suggestions for improvement. However, the effectiveness of target setting varies and not all marking helps to develop pupils' learning. A wide range of appropriate assessment tests is used in all years from Reception. The results are used effectively with teacher assessment to monitor the progress of each child and to prepare strategies to aid their learning in weaker areas. Assessment in lessons and results of tests are used well to plan further learning.

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

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

- 4.1 Pupils' personal development is excellent. It successfully fulfils the school's aims that each pupil can flourish as an individual, is happy, successful and keen to learn so that they grow into young people who are fulfilled and able to make a positive contribution to society. It is supported by the excellent relationships and happy atmosphere prevalent in the school.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is highly developed. They are happy and confident and able to share their feelings with each other and with adults. Pupils enjoy being surrounded by art and music and respond sensitively to both. They have a good understanding of the Christian faith and demonstrate empathy towards the beliefs others may have. They are self-critical from a young age and aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- 4.3 Across the school, pupils' moral code is extremely well developed. They are fully aware of the school motto: 'I am, I can, I ought, I will', and like and agree with it. They have a clear idea of good behaviour, contributing to their classroom rules. They understand the importance of rules and sanctions, developing a strong sense of right and wrong through helpful discussions during PSHE lessons. They are very aware of their roles as citizens and their responsibility to society, discussing moral dilemmas affecting them and worldwide problems. Pupils participate in fund-raising events and take a keen interest in where the money is going.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. Their competent grasp of social courtesies is evident in the polite, warm way they greet and converse with visitors. They enjoy and appreciate friendships across ages. All year groups have opportunities to take some responsibilities within the school and in Year 6 this is further developed through roles such as house captains and head or deputy head girl. There is no school council so girls have little opportunity to have a voice within the school community, although the head girl and deputy meet regularly with the headmistress and share any concerns. Pupils' good understanding of public institutions and historical sites is enhanced through visits such as the one to the Golden Hinde in Year 4, as well as through the RE and PSHE curriculum.
- 4.5 Pupils have a strongly developed cultural awareness. They acknowledge and respect each other's similarities and differences. Their appreciation of cultural diversity is enhanced through talks by visitors from different faiths. Pupils' cultural knowledge is enriched through participation in the local Rickmansworth festival as well as visits to London museums and participation in music festivals. Their wider cultural knowledge is promoted effectively by studies of artists and musicians from a range of world cultures. For example, during art day some pupils drew striking portraits in the style of Picasso.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good with excellent features, strongly supporting pupils' personal development and the school's aims to provide a caring atmosphere for its pupils.
- 4.7 Provision for pupils' pastoral care is excellent. All staff show considerable care for the girls. Form teachers note pastoral concerns and these are discussed at weekly pastoral meetings with actions recorded and reviewed regularly. Pupils say that they can easily approach teachers with problems and that these are dealt with sensitively and swiftly. Older pupils receive worthwhile support in preparation for their next school. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community is excellent. Pupils are happy. They are at ease with and respect staff, who are good role models. A warm and encouraging atmosphere is evident throughout the school. In interviews pupils said that they appreciate the support from staff and the friendships they have. Staff use the rewards system effectively to acknowledge and value academic contributions, effort and care for others and to promote good behaviour.
- 4.8 Arrangements for health and safety are good. Policies and procedures to monitor and deal with harassment and bullying are comprehensive and effective. Pupils say that they have no concerns about bullying, but are aware of what bullying involves and are confident that staff would deal with any quickly and constructively. Sanctions such as 'name on the board' are used to good effect if pupils' behaviour or work is unacceptable. Pupils say that they consider the sanctions used to be fair and that they feel safe and secure within the school.
- 4.9 Safeguarding is effective. The senior management team (SMT) reviews the detailed policies for safeguarding and associated issues regularly and governors and all staff are kept aware and updated. Training for safeguarding is regular and the related policies are helpful to staff. A detailed health and safety policy includes fire safety as well as general health and safety issues. The policy details are not always clearly written for ease of reading, but practice is generally good and risk assessments for the different areas are thorough. Fire risk assessments are detailed and reviewed annually and all other checks relating to fire prevention are frequent. Fire drills are regular and recorded fully. Suitable arrangements are made for pupils who are unwell or injured. There is an appropriate policy in place to promote access for those with disabilities. The admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored. Sufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to understand about healthy living through aspects of PE, science and PSHE teaching. School meals are nutritious and enjoyed by pupils.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent and fully upholds the ethos and the aims of the school. The board of governors provides strong strategic leadership for the school. It has ensured that all recommendations from the previous inspection have been met, including enlarging the SMT so that the head's role is fully supported.
- 5.2 Individual governors supply a wide variety of specialisms to the board, including medical, legal, financial and educational expertise, and good use is made of outside consultants where needed. Four sub-committees meet regularly; the full board meets twice each term and extra 'strategy days' are held for long-term planning so that all issues are given good coverage. Finances are carefully controlled within a two-year budget, and building projects, staffing and resources are well managed. Educational standards are effectively monitored through the education committee by discussing school assessment data and other achievements. The board carries out helpful self-evaluation that enables it to implement further changes and governors have regular training.
- 5.3 Governors have a good insight into the school through their regular visits, which include sitting in lessons, as well as through reports to committees. Individual governors have specific responsibilities, such as for child protection or health and safety, and as a result these areas are well considered. Governors discuss and contribute to relevant parts of the school development plan. This provides effective challenge to the school, as do the committees and the head's twice-termly reports. This thorough understanding and involvement by the governing body enables it to give excellent guidance and direction for development.
- 5.4 The board has a thorough awareness of its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. Governors carry out frequent and systematic monitoring of practice and policies for these areas. Outside advice is used for a health and safety audit and for guidance on fire safety. The child protection committee reports to the full board each term. All governors have attended child protection training. In these ways the governors ensure that the SMT is well supported and that pupils at the school are kept safe.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good. The school's aims to provide a happy, caring environment in which each child can flourish and make good progress are met effectively. The girls are happy, reach good standards and show excellent personal development as a direct result of the school's leadership and management. The recommendations relating to the curriculum and assessment in the previous inspection report have been fully implemented and the SMT has been enlarged.
- 5.6 The SMT has a clear vision for the future of the school, in both the short and long term. Priorities are decided through on-going evaluation by the SMT, resulting in a school development plan to which all departments contribute a detailed curriculum section. The plan lacks internal consistency, for example success criteria are not included in all sections. Department leaders carry out regular monitoring of curriculum planning, standards of work and teaching and this has been used to improve the marking policy. External monitoring does not take place in departments

with a single teacher and its use and effectiveness vary overall, resulting in inconsistencies in subject teaching and standards.

- 5.7 Leadership and management are successful in appointing good quality teachers. New staff are given a thorough induction programme including safeguarding and health and safety, and newly qualified teachers are supported appropriately. A supportive annual appraisal process for teachers and assistants is appreciated by staff and encourages further training to help in professional development. A new system of appraisal for the head and bursar by governors is planned for next term. The school provides a full in-service training programme each term. Annual training and induction include elements of health and safety and safeguarding and an efficient system exists to ensure that all staff are familiar with policies and observe the required procedures. Thorough arrangements are in place for checking the suitability of staff and governors and a central appointments register is carefully maintained. At the time of the initial visit a very small number of peripatetic staff did not have the necessary medical self-certification checks, but the school acted swiftly to rectify this and these were all obtained with immediate effect.
- 5.8 Teaching, support, administrative and catering staff work together very well and this contributes strongly to the happy, caring, family atmosphere of the school. Parents say that they appreciate the nurturing environment and the personal touch evident in the school's management.

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

- 5.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Parent responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, expressing their satisfaction with all aspects of the school. Parents say that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and promotes worthwhile attitudes, views that are confirmed by inspection findings. They consider that they can communicate easily with the school and receive timely replies to questions.
- 5.10 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in the life of the school in line with its aims to work with parents for their children's education. Parents are elected as form representatives for each year. These parents meet formally as a group once a term with the Headmistress to discuss and exchange ideas that can then be fed back to the other form parents. They also meet with the headmistress at any point in the year should matters arise. Parents are all able to be involved in the active parent/teacher association (PTA). The PTA organises highly successful charitable fund-raising events as well as supporting school projects. Parents enjoy sharing assemblies with pupils as well as plays and concerts and join in the extra-curricular trips each term.
- 5.11 Parents of current and prospective pupils receive comprehensive information about the school. A parents' handbook gives detailed and helpful information about all aspects of school life and includes many of the school policies. The weekly newsletter provides a regular summary of events and is communicated in hard copy as well as email. Parents are able to email their children's form teacher directly, as well as the headmistress, which gives a quick and convenient method of communication for parents and staff. An open door policy ensures that parents can communicate with the school at all times with any concerns they have about their children. Parents receive regular reports about the effort and attainment of their children as well as having two or three meetings with teachers annually in which they can discuss their children's progress. Written reports give good detail about the

work covered and the children's effort. Some reports indicate how pupils could improve their standard but most are general in nature and lack targets for development of further learning. The school has recently carried out a useful parent survey and acted quickly to implement beneficial changes to parents' meetings as a result of its findings.

- 5.12 The school has a clear procedure for the reporting of parental concerns and handling of complaints and deals with both with due care.

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

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

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

6.1 This outstanding setting fully meets the needs of all children while appreciating their individual differences. An excellent system of review and self-evaluation ensures the realisation of the school's aims to provide a high quality learning environment where children can reach their full potential. It also ensures experiences that enrich and extend the skills, talents and values of all children. The capacity for sustained improvement is excellent. Staff maintain high standards by regularly identifying areas for improvement and create a stimulating, colourful environment, where children feel valued and safe. The recommendations of the last Ofsted inspection, to review the availability of resources showing positive images of culture, disability and gender, have been met.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding, with clear vision and understanding of high standards. Safeguarding procedures are robust, with efficient and comprehensive policies and risk assessments firmly embedded. All adults have been suitably checked, are well qualified and appropriately trained. The records, policies and procedures necessary for efficient management are well implemented. Procedures to promote equality and reduce discrimination are effective. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and express strong appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of their care. A recent workshop for parents providing information supporting areas of learning at home was very successful, and parents expressed a keen interest in understanding more about the six areas of learning and how they could be involved. There is an open-door policy, planning is available on the parents' notice board, and termly newsletters are sent home. Effective use and good management of resources, including those outdoors, leads to successful outcomes for all children.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. Assessment through observation is rigorous, and information gained is used effectively to guide planning and target next steps. Children benefit from stimulating experiences in every area of learning. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities that include both indoor and outdoor experiences. Staff ask challenging questions to develop children's thinking skills. Provision for their welfare, health and safety is exemplary. Excellent provision is also made for LDD and EAL children with competent one-to-one help from support staff. Good health and well-being are emphasised and children are encouraged to eat healthily. The behaviour policy is well implemented, leading to a happy, busy atmosphere, where children benefit fully from the opportunities provided.



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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They make rapid progress and are on course to meet all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year, with many likely to exceed them. Children practised using phonic blending skills to sound out new words and were able to recognise and name mathematical shapes, including hexagons and cylinders. Children are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated, relating well to one another and to adults. They co-operate well in their learning, begin to make choices and decisions and enjoy school life. Children respect and trust their teachers. They appreciate their healthy lunches and snacks and they understand about keeping safe.

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

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Anthea Hickman

Mrs Susan Bailes

Mrs Nova Shoesmith

Mrs Lynda Boden

Reporting Inspector

Head, IAPS school

Head of department, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector