



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE FIRS SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Firs School

Full Name of School	<b>The Firs School</b>
DCSF Number	<b>896/6004</b>
Address	<b>Firs School 45 Newton Lane Chester Cheshire CH2 2HJ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01244 322443</b>
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Email Address	<b>admin@firsschool.net</b>
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Margaret Denton</b>
Chair of Directors	<b>The Revd Edward Longman</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>228</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (148 boys; 80 girls;)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 0      5-11: 167 3-5 (EYFS): 61      11-18: 0</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>228</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection date/EYFS	<b>25 Jan 2010 to 26 Jan 2010</b>
Final (team) visit	<b>22 Feb 2010 to 24 Feb 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 March 2006.

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 The Firs School is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of three and eleven years. It is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Chester. The school was founded in 1945 and has remained in the ownership of the same family, who established it as a limited company in September 2009. The directors of the company govern the school and work closely with the headmistress in relevant aspects of its day-to-day management. After the previous inspection in March 2006, a Nursery was opened in September of that year.
- 1.2 There are 228 pupils in the school; of the 61 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the 24 children in the Nursery attend part-time. Provision for an extended day is available from Reception upwards. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN), and eleven have English as an additional language (EAL), although none requires additional support for this. The school has identified 34 pupils as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), all of whom receive learning support from the school. While the majority of pupils are British, a small minority of other cultures are represented. The school is not selective and the ability range of the pupils is wide, but is broadly above average. Pupils proceed to a range of mainly selective local independent and maintained senior schools.
- 1.3 Through a partnership based on mutual understanding and trust, which involves teachers, parents and children, the school aims to give pupils the opportunity to discover their talents and achieve the highest standards consistent with their natural ability. It seeks to provide a secure, supportive Christian community in which pupils can grow into an understanding of themselves and of how they can cooperate with others to achieve common objectives. The school aims to offer a stimulating and interesting environment which will give children a sense of adventure and a desire to discover things for themselves which can be applied to life's challenges, so that they can understand and find ways of overcoming problems. It strives to be a caring community where pupils are appreciated, and helped to see that everyone has a special value and great fulfilment can be gained by contributing to the well-being of others.
- 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***

The Firs School	NC name
Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 Pupils of all abilities and needs, from the EYFS onwards, make good progress and are successful in their learning and personal development. The school fully meets its aims to give pupils the opportunity to discover their talents and achieve the highest standards consistent with their natural ability. The pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and this contributes to their successful achievement. The curriculum is broad and well planned to enable pupils to reach above average standards. Learning support is of excellent quality, both in class and in separate lessons. Extension work is planned, particularly in mathematics, for more able pupils. The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Good teaching contributes to the academic progress and success of the pupils; it encourages interest, application, effort and good behaviour.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. They have a very well developed sense of the spiritual dimension and a strong moral and social awareness. They develop a thorough understanding of the need to think about others and to take responsibility for themselves and others around them both in school and in the outside world. Pupils' cultural awareness and development is excellent; their love of music and art offers an insight into the cultural heritage of other countries. The quality of pastoral care is outstanding; pupils feel safe and happy in a secure and caring environment.
- 2.3 The directors are highly committed to the success of the school and have an excellent insight; their responsibilities for welfare and health and safety are carried out extremely carefully. Their development planning is relevant and responsible. The senior management team, led by the headmistress, is highly effective in its educational direction and fulfilment of the aims of the school. Links with parents are strong and relationships are built on mutual respect. Parents are made very welcome and appreciate the secure and supportive environment in which their children are educated. Parents are well satisfied with the education, teaching, guidance and support provided for their children; a high proportion said that they were happy with the progress their child was making and with the work which they had to do at home. A significant minority were less happy with the information they were given about their child's progress and with the quality of communication with the school. Only a few pupils replied to their questionnaire; their responses were very positive overall.

## **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 balance in the curriculum though a coordinated approach to curriculum and subject planning;
  2. further develop communication with parents, and reporting to them about their children's progress;
  3. ensure that the outdoor learning environment is used more effectively to foster children's learning in the EYFS;
  4. make certain that daily routines, such as snack times, are fully utilised for the younger children in the EYFS, particularly to promote their personal independence skills.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 Standards are high when compared with the average for maintained primary schools. Although there are considerable variations in ability levels in and between year groups, standards are well above the national average by Year 6. A range of nationally standardised tests in reading, spelling, writing, mathematics, verbal and non-verbal reasoning is used by the school, and results confirm the good levels of achievement observed in the scrutiny of work through the school; these were particularly high in Year 6. In external examinations and challenges, such as in music, language and poetry and in scholarship awards, very creditable results are achieved.
- 3.2 From the EYFS onwards, pupils are successfully educated in line with the school's aims and they make good progress over time in relation to their ability. They are thoroughly grounded in the knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in their curriculum subjects. In accordance with the school's aims, they are educated in a stimulating and interesting environment, and they are continually given the opportunity and encouragement to discover their own academic strengths and talents and achieve the highest possible standards consistent with their individual ability.
- 3.3 Skills in literacy and numeracy are very well developed from the youngest year groups. Pupils are articulate and confident, particularly so by Year 6, where they can discuss, persuasively and coherently, issues such as the place of Latin in the curriculum. At all ages, they listen carefully to each other and their teacher. Thoughtful descriptive and creative writing is encouraged from Years 1 and 2, and high standards in poetry and prose are reached by Year 6. From an early age, lessons and activities are carefully planned to give pupils the experience of discussing their tasks with each other and of thinking and working on their own.
- 3.4 Logical and independent thought is encouraged, as when Year 6 pupils expressed their ideas clearly as they began to study algebra. They quickly understood how to solve equations and moved on to use this knowledge in investigations of patterns; they understood the need for a chart to organise information gathered. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were engaged and purposeful, involved in their own work on number charts, confidently able to explain what they were doing. Year 5 were very articulate in mathematics lessons, and made excellent use of subject vocabulary.
- 3.5 The well-resourced computer room gives pupils opportunities to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT), which they apply with confidence to other subjects. Art, design and technology, and pottery lessons offer many opportunities for the development of creativity and an appreciation of beauty. Year 2 pupils were justly proud of the art work they had produced in ICT after studying the paintings of Kandinsky.
- 3.6 The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are exemplary, and this contributes to their successful achievement. They apply themselves confidently and diligently to their work, and show excellent cooperation, concentration and perseverance. They respond with enjoyment and enthusiasm to tasks and challenges set in the classroom. In a Year 6 science investigation of forces and

upthrust on objects in water, pupils were excited and eager, but also self-disciplined, as they experimented with the stability of different shapes of boats and maximum loads.

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

- 3.7 Strong curricular provision covers all the required areas of learning and makes a significant contribution to the successful education of pupils of all ages, abilities and needs. In support of the school's aims, the broad curriculum gives pupils opportunities to discover their individual strengths and develop a sense of enquiry within an environment that encourages discussion and debate. The breadth is enhanced by the study of French from Year 2 and Latin in Years 5 and 6. The colourful and exciting displays around the school are testimony to the breadth of the curriculum, and the pupils' enthusiasm for, and success in, their learning, both in the classroom and in extra-curricular visits, clubs and activities.
- 3.8 Subject co-ordinators have the responsibility of planning the subject schemes of work, and individual form teachers then have flexibility to plan their class timetables. However, a degree of balance and continuity in the curriculum is lost in this approach and teaching, learning and achievement is affected in general by the lack of consistency and cohesion.
- 3.9 The extra-curricular activities programme, which includes Spanish, cookery, choir and tag rugby, offers a good variety for a school of this size. This programme changes seasonally and pupils are enthusiastic about the range of clubs available; many choose to participate in several each week.
- 3.10 Pupils benefit also from links with the local community. They make good use of local sports facilities. The school has valuable links with a local grammar school which offers enrichment courses for able pupils, and senior pupils from another local school have run dance and drama workshops. There are also useful links with two local churches, one of which allows its car park to be used for the school's Park and Stride scheme.
- 3.11 As recommended in the previous inspection, the schemes of work for physical education have been completed and additional time has been allocated for the subject within the timetable. Interactive whiteboards and increased computer facilities with a fully networked system have been installed and a new art, design and technology room has been opened recently; all this has enriched learning opportunities, as has the greater variety of extra-curricular clubs. A high proportion of parents expressed their approval of the curriculum, while pupils were enthusiastic about their extra-curricular activities, particularly sport and the choirs.
- 3.12 The provision for pupils who require learning support is excellent. Pupils benefit from the high level of expertise and resources in a dedicated support unit with well-qualified and experienced staff. The learning support department works closely with class teachers and parents, and systems for referral are well established and effective. Effective and thorough individual education plans are written and updated each term, in conjunction with class teachers. The support received by pupils instils confidence and a positive, willing attitude. Gifted and talented pupils are also identified for additional provision. There are regular timetabled mathematics enrichment sessions with a visiting specialist, while those gifted at singing have the chance to join the extremely talented chamber choir.

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

- 3.13 The quality of the teaching is good overall, with some outstanding features, and contributes significantly to the academic success of the pupils. It supports the aims of the school well by giving pupils a love of learning and an enjoyment of challenge. Teaching benefits from a generous range of resources, including interactive whiteboards in every classroom, and ample computers, of which excellent use is being made. A high proportion of parents agreed that the teaching helped their child to make progress; many praised the help given to pupils who required learning support and welcomed the increased recognition of and provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- 3.14 In the best lessons observed, clear objectives, well chosen activities and enthusiastic focused teaching led to excellent learning and high levels of achievement. The teaching was carefully planned and organised, with good use of available resources, and interest was often sustained by links to other relevant ongoing work or visits. As pupils proceed through the school, they benefit from confident, knowledgeable and well-qualified teachers who include specialists for languages, music, religious education (RE), pottery and sport. Mathematics in the senior years is made interesting and engaging through investigation, a well-paced variety of activities, extensive subject knowledge and excellent use of perceptive questions.
- 3.15 Pupils' learning and achievement are enhanced by staff who thoroughly understand the needs of their pupils and have high expectations; they use skilful questioning techniques and give positive explanations and reassuring responses to the pupils' own observations and questions. Work is set according to ability and stress is continually placed on the correct use of language. Pupils benefit from the independent and shared learning which is encouraged and the emphasis on listening and observing. Excellent relationships are clearly well established.
- 3.16 Since the previous inspection, steps have been taken to make schemes of work and planning more consistent; a marking scheme has been introduced and the results of assessments are being used by teachers to identify the learning needs of their pupils. However, a more uniform whole-school approach to schemes of work and subject planning is still required to bring all documentation to the standard of the best and ensure continuity in teaching and learning.
- 3.17 The teaching and therefore the quality of education enjoyed by pupils has benefited from an increased emphasis on monitoring by senior management, which is being extended to peer observation, and further relevant in-service training. An increasingly comprehensive assessment framework, making use of the new ICT provision is enabling efficient tracking of pupils' achievement and effort and also target setting. Interest and independence in learning are being fostered, as are self-evaluation and peer-evaluation.

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

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

- 4.1 The outstanding personal development of the pupils is continually in evidence in the way in which they conduct themselves around the school and in their relationships with each other and with adults. The school is highly successful in its aim to promote strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Personal qualities such as honesty and friendliness are greatly valued by staff and pupils alike.
- 4.2 The pupils have a very well-developed sense of the spiritual. They demonstrate creativity, insight, imagination and concern for others. In RE, pupils are actively encouraged to reflect upon and make a personal response to the religious and spiritual dimension of life, as they discuss questions such as 'Where does religion come from?' They are encouraged to develop a sense of awe and wonder; Year 3 considered the diversity and beauty of the world around them by exploring the infinite range of colours. In music, art and English, pupils explore the spiritual dimension by responding to, and describing, the effect of listening to classical music. They have excellent opportunities to explore their creativity and imagination through a broad range of visual, tactile and sensory experiences and the colourful displays around the school celebrate pupils' wonder at the world around them.
- 4.3 Pupils develop a very strong moral awareness and sense of responsibility to others, consistent with the school's aims and its caring culture. Pupils speak openly and proudly about following the Firs Way, their code of conduct, which underpins all that happens at school from an early age. As Year 6 pupils put it, "The Firs Way works for everyone". Incidents of negative behaviour are rare and pupils reflect on their misdemeanour, are sorry and learn from the experience. Younger pupils use circle time to discuss their problems and to find possible solutions. Pupils respond to the strong sense of right and wrong which is reinforced throughout the school with displays and posters reminding them of positive behaviour. Pupils show strong commitment to helping others who are less fortunate than themselves. They raise money for charities through a range of activities including a recent highly successful sponsored 'times-tables' challenge. Strong links exist with India; these encourage pupils to provide financial support to enable Indian children to receive an education.
- 4.4 Pupils are extremely well developed socially and they place high value on contributing to the happy and successful school community. They enjoy taking on responsibility as class helpers, prefects, games captains and librarians. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils learn to take responsibility with small tasks and duties. Pupils have had an opportunity to develop an eco-council which introduces initiatives to help the environment. Older pupils demonstrate a sense of responsibility to act as good role models for younger pupils at lunch, on the playground and around school, and their behaviour sets an excellent example.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is very strongly developed. Some excellent multi-faith work in RE adds to cultural awareness and pupils learn about other ways of life in geography as they explore the contrasting lifestyles of children in Kenya and Britain. A high value is placed on respect for other cultures and religions, and pupils enjoy learning about them from visiting speakers and their peers who have different faiths. Pupils celebrate and appreciate the importance of Christian and other festivals, including Diwali, the Chinese New Year and Hanukkah. They are keen to learn more about the cultural diversity of the world and they enjoy opportunities to further their understanding. The pupils' cultural education is enhanced by many

visits to local places of interest. Visiting speakers regularly talk to the pupils about charities, different faiths and humanitarian disasters such as the earthquake in Haiti.

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

- 4.6 The school excels in providing pastoral care of the highest standard. The leadership in pastoral care is very strong; there are clear aims which are well defined and understood by all teaching and ancillary staff, and a strong commitment from everyone to value each child as an individual. Pupils too understand very well their code of conduct which encapsulates the aims. In response to the questionnaire, virtually all parents indicated that they were happy with the pastoral care given to their children, and pupils themselves said that they feel safe and secure and well looked after.
- 4.7 All staff provide highly effective support and guidance and pupils feel that they always have someone they can approach if they have a problem. Relationships are extremely warm and positive between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Pupils are keen to celebrate the success of their peers and to support one another. They place high value on being a good friend.
- 4.8 The policy and procedures for guarding against harassment and bullying are effective and the relevant staff are fully trained. The policy is very well understood by pupils, who are aware that bullying is completely unacceptable; they themselves stated that "This is a no-bullying school". There are thoroughly effective procedures for promoting good behaviour, such as house points, merits, stickers and certificates and any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with constructively and sensitively. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is being successfully developed to make an ever-stronger contribution to pastoral care and to the personal development of the pupils.
- 4.9 The safeguarding policy contains all the necessary requirements and is implemented successfully, with appropriate child protection training in place for all staff. All necessary precautions, including regular drills, to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken, and professional health and safety and fire safety audits have been carried out. The school has a plan for the improvement of access for those with disabilities.
- 4.10 School food is healthy and nutritious and enjoyed by pupils, although older pupils consider that choice is limited. Pupils are taught about healthy eating and exercise in science and they are encouraged to develop an interest in healthy food through the cookery club. In design and technology, Year 5 pupils assess the nutritional value of a selection of cereal bars and they look forward to creating their own healthy recipes and cooking their cereal bars. Year 3 pupils analysing cereals were surprised at the high sugar content of their favourite products. However, the pupils still bring into school their own break-time snacks which vary in terms of nutritional worth. Pupils participate with enthusiasm in sport and games activities, including matches against other schools; good use is made of excellent local indoor and outdoor sports facilities to supplement those of the school.
- 4.11 Since the previous inspection, a new medical room has been built and careful provision is made for pupils who are ill or require medication. The admission and attendance registers are well maintained and appropriately stored. Procedures for absence and lateness are efficiently organised.

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

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

- 5.1 The school benefits from highly effective and supportive governance, with total commitment to the successful fulfilment of its aims. The four directors of the recently constituted limited company include the proprietors; they are all members of the founding family of the school. Succession planning has been carefully arranged, and the third generation of the family is bringing highly relevant experience and expertise to take the school forward.
- 5.2 The directors are very well informed; they provide fully effective oversight of the school in line with its aims, and fulfil their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Three of the directors are highly involved in the day-to-day running of the school as classroom teacher, domestic bursar and bursar. They have an excellent insight into the working of the school and the areas where they need to provide support and stimulus for growth and improvement.
- 5.3 The directors are fully aware of and effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. They have ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully attended to.

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

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The senior management team never lose sight of the aims of the school which they, with the board of directors and the staff, have formulated with great thought and care. Trust and mutual respect are evident between the headmistress and the directors, who are all working together for the benefit of the pupils, and to uphold the high standards and traditions of this happy, family school.
- 5.5 The senior management team, led by the headmistress, is very successful in providing clear educational direction, which is reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and their achievements, and in the very high standard of their personal development. The school development plan illustrates the effectiveness of the leadership and management in self-evaluation, setting priorities and working to ensure that they are achieved. Extensive in-service training over the last few years has been well received and has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinators of the different stages in the school are efficient and committed, as are subject co-ordinators; they are aware of the need to monitor balance across the taught curriculum.
- 5.6 The senior management team is aware of, and committed to fulfilling, their responsibilities to recruit, support, develop and motivate staff at all levels. They also ensure that they are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. There are thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of all staff, including the directors.
- 5.7 Careful attention has been paid to the recommendations of the previous inspection and significant improvements have been made in the required areas, including the school development plan.

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

- 5.8 Links with parents are good and relationships are built on mutual trust, well established over time. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated their satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children; a high proportion was pleased with the high standards of behaviour which the school achieves and its promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views. Parents also indicated they were happy with the teaching, the open-door policy, the progress their child was making and with the work their child had to do at home. The homework diaries provide a valuable home-school link and they are well used by pupils.
- 5.9 Although a significant minority did not agree, parents have good opportunities to be involved in the work of the school and information about the school is readily available for present and new parents by means of a clear and attractive prospectus, and an informative school website which is regularly updated. Parents are made very welcome and appreciate the secure and supportive environment in which their children are educated.
- 5.10 Parents receive full reports in the second half of the summer term giving information on the pupils' effort, attainment and progress over the academic year in the full range of subjects. However, they would welcome more information about their children's progress; inspection findings were concurrent with this view.
- 5.11 The parents' association organises social events such as Christmas and summer fairs which are very well attended. They also organise charitable events and support the local community for example by holding monthly tea parties for elderly neighbours. The Firs Fellowship holds a weekly prayer group that is open to all parents and members of the school community.
- 5.12 The majority of parents are happy with the way in which concerns are handled and they value the approachability of the management.

**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) Overall effectiveness: how well the setting meets the needs of children in the EYFS.**

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good with many outstanding features. Effective safeguarding procedures are implemented within the school, and the children's welfare is promoted very well. Outstanding relationships have been fostered with children, as adults adopt a friendly and encouraging approach. Informative assessments are made on entry, initially with the help of parents. Staff track children's progress regularly and make effective use of assessments, ensuring that all children make good progress, whatever their individual needs. The children's starting points are varied, and their outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good overall. Effective monitoring is in place that is documented well, for example, in the early years 'Workforce Development Plan'. There is a robust staff appraisal system in operation, including peer observations, ensuring that staff training needs are identified and met. Since the last inspection there have been some clear improvements to the overall provision.

### **6.(b) The effectiveness of leadership and management for the EYFS.**

6.2 Leadership and management are good, helping to ensure a safe and secure environment. Close links have been established with children's parents, such as through the mutual sharing of observations and information, for example, when children enter the EYFS. There is a commitment to regularly monitor and evaluate the overall provision to inform on priorities for the future. The policies and procedures are suitable and reviewed regularly. These are implemented effectively to ensure consistency, also to promote equality and anti-discriminatory practice. Resources are deployed effectively and used efficiently to help meet the needs of all children. Children have access to a wide range of good quality resources, particularly indoors, to promote many aspects of their learning.

### **6.(c) The quality of provision in the EYFS**

6.3 The overall quality of provision is good. Staff work very effectively together and are deployed purposefully. They know the children well, resulting in children striving to meet high expectations. The indoor learning environment helps children to develop good learning habits. The children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very effectively through celebrating each other's achievements. The extent to which daily routines, such as snack times, are utilised for the younger children to promote their personal independence is limited. Speaking and listening skills are fostered very effectively, especially through captivating story times. The staff promote children's ability to count everyday objects, for example, during register time, when children are encouraged to count how many have arrived. Children are able to operate a range of ICT to support their learning. They are developing their gross motor skills through a variety of vigorous physical activities, and their creative development is fostered particularly well, highlighted clearly in their recent art work.

**6.(d) Outcomes for children in the EYFS**

- 6.4 Children clearly enjoy their time in the setting, and particularly enjoy celebrating each other's achievements. They are very confident to make choices and are able to work independently. Children will confide in adults and are developing an awareness of possible dangers. They are encouraged to think about how to stay safe, both indoors and outdoors. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy eating, particularly through snack times when eating a variety of fruit. They show a high level of respect towards each other and staff, and are very familiar with the school rules. Children have developed some lasting friendships. They are becoming effective learners and are developing skills for the future, such as through using a range of ICT to support their learning.

## **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 chairman of the directors, 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 Danice Iles	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Belinda Canham	Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)
Mrs Victoria Pugh	Team Inspector (Deputy Headmistress, IAPS school)
Miss Valerie Craven	Early Years Lead Inspector