

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School

Full Name of the School	Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School
DCSF Number	309/6084
Early Years Number	N/A
Address	2 Highgate Avenue, London N6 5RX.
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Principal	Mrs Mary Fysh
Proprietor	Cantabile Limited
Age Range (of the whole school)	3 to 7
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	23rd to 26th March 2009
Early Years Age Range	3 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	23rd and 24th March 2009

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 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 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS 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. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 The Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School is a day school for boys and girls from the ages of three to seven. The school opened in 1977 as a child-minding provider for a small group of children. The school is owned by a limited company, consisting of the directors who are the principal and two further family members. The Pre-Preparatory department (Pre-Prep) opened in September 2004 following an extension of the premises. The school occupies a considerably enlarged Edwardian house in Highgate and has recently benefited from a new extension comprising a hall, library, cloakroom, classroom and children's toilets. The grounds consist of a large enclosed play area and garden to the back. In addition to this, the school uses nearby leisure facilities for ice skating, trampoline and swimming lessons. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2005 and this is the first inspection undertaken by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.
- 1.2 The school aims to create a happy, secure and stimulating environment where each child, regardless of gender, race, religion or family background, is taught to the best of his/ her ability. Through participation in a wide range of timetabled and extra-curricular activities it promotes self-confidence and self-esteem. It seeks to encourage independence of thought, the development of social and interpersonal skills and endeavours to support and nurture each child, providing a happy, relaxed and friendly atmosphere where children feel safe and secure.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 37 boys and 35 girls in the school, of whom 54 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There were eighteen pupils in Years 1 and 2 (Pre-Prep). Avenue pupils are drawn mainly from business and professional families living in neighbouring areas of North London. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, and diverse cultures and ethnicity. Five pupils are from non-European cultures. The school has three pupils for whom English is not their principal language, although all speak English well. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs but the school has identified four pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
- 1.4 The majority of children join the school at three years of age and move on to other independent schools at the ages of five or seven. Children registered for the EYFS are not assessed on entry to the school. Pupils entering other year groups visit the school and are assessed informally. The school does not select pupils by attainment; the purpose of the visit is to ascertain the pupil's level of learning and ability. From the results of standardised tests, the overall ability profile of the school is above the national average, with some pupils well above and some below.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational experience provided is outstanding and reflects the schools' aims and philosophies, to promote self-confidence and self-esteem through participation in a wide range of timetabled and extra-curricular activities. This is a further improvement on the very good report of the previous inspection.
- 2.2 The outstanding breadth of curriculum gives pupils experience in, and contributes effectively to, their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. The curriculum is based on the six areas of learning leading to the Early Learning Goals for the under-fives and leads on to the National Curriculum when children show they are ready. The study of religious education (RE), French and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are also included. The educational experience enables pupils to develop excellent numeracy skills and to speak, listen, write and read with confidence and enjoyment. It also enables pupils to reach the academic standards required for them to enter the schools of their choice. French enhances linguistic opportunities and starts in the Nursery. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well provided for. The use of specialist teachers, for instance in music and cookery, enhances the depth and breadth of study available.
- 2.3 Pupils' experience of PSHE is outstanding, in keeping with the school's aims and ethos. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities such as yoga, where pupils demonstrate trust and co-operation and learn to calm the mind and maintain a flexible, healthy body. French lessons, dance, drama, ice-skating, pottery and all areas of literacy contribute significantly to pupils' confidence and expertise and prepares them particularly well for opportunities to integrate with the wider community. Visitors come to school, including parents, to give talks in order to extend knowledge and learning. Excursions to the Tate Gallery, the Bethnal Green Toy Museum and the Science and Natural History Museums further support the breadth of the curriculum and complement and extend the excellent provision in school.
- 2.4 A high level of attention is given to preparing pupils for their next stage in education. The very good transition arrangements that are in place from Reception to Year 1 are effective in providing continuous learning opportunities. Good liaison with next schools ensures pupils successfully perform at the standards required for entry, and the final assembly, wearing graduation caps and gowns and singing the school song, presents the pupils with a sense of readiness for moving on.
- 2.5 The curriculum is planned highly effectively. Informal and formal discussion has created the written policies which provide equality of access opportunities for all pupils, and promote participation in a wide range of activities and learning opportunities both inside the classrooms and in the school grounds, at work and at play. Learning is enhanced by the attention given to identifying cross-curricular opportunities in subject and year group handbooks.
- 2.6 The school meets the curricular requirements of all pupils needing learning support. The excellent staff to pupil ratio ensures that pupils receive the individual attention they need in order to make maximum progress at every stage of their learning, by supporting and extending them according to their ability, including the exceptionally able. Professional support, such as speech and language therapists, is provided as necessary. The school maintains an up-to-date record of pupils with specific learning targets and this includes pupils who are identified as gifted and talented.

- 2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.8 Pupils' learning and achievement is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects and activities provided at the school. This is strongly supported by the aims of the school to create a happy, secure and stimulating environment which supports children in achieving to the best of their ability. The school has maintained and improved upon the very good progress of pupils reported at the time of the last inspection. Parents of the school confidently commented, "The school instils a love of learning from an early age."
- 2.9 By the end of Reception, most children attain the Early Learning Goals with many exceeding them. Their literacy and numeracy skills are developing very well. Pupils in the Pre-Prep apply their knowledge, skills and understanding highly effectively in subjects and activities. They think and act critically and creatively; Year 2 pupils can suggest why the Russians sent a dog into space and Year 1 pupils carefully reason why toys are old or new. Pupils acquire a high level of speaking, listening, reading and writing competence. They apply their growing knowledge of grammar and punctuation confidently in a range of extended independent writing tasks and recite poetry with expression and rhythm, commenting critically on each other's performance. They employ a high standard of mathematical skills across the curriculum, for example using Venn diagrams with ease to sort items that use electricity, and representing data in charts and graphs when carrying out scientific investigations. Pupils demonstrate logical and independent thought, for example expressing an abstract feeling in terms of their own experience in their yoga lessons, asking questions appropriately and speaking confidently to each other and in front of the class. They use ICT competently to support their learning.
- 2.10 There are no significant differences in relative attainment between different groups of pupils, subjects and curricular areas. Less able and gifted and talented pupils are enabled to make progress in all subjects through the excellent attention offered as a consequence of the very high staff to pupil ratio.
- 2.11 Standards seen in pupils' work and in observed lessons are well above average and often exceptional for their age and ability. The pupils' good achievement in their time at the school is underlined by the high standard of entry of many of the schools to which the pupils transfer when they leave the Pre-Prep.
- 2.12 Pupils' achievements in academic, personal and social development within the context of the school life are significant. The opportunities for performance, such as singing in harmony, choral speaking and delivering results from group investigations in lessons and the wider curriculum contributes well to this. Pupils take part in World Book Week activities and the Primary Maths Challenge day and all pupils perform in the school productions at Christmas and the end of the summer term.
- 2.13 Pupils are able to take notes and study individually, contributing enthusiastically to drafting class ideas on the interactive white board successfully and using these as a planning tool in their independent creative writing. They organise their work on their own; for example, pupils safely access and retrieve information from websites to create an information document in their literacy lessons.

- 2.14 Pupils study and work co-operatively with others exceptionally well in pairs, teams and groups. Year 2 pupils wrote information text about space in twos and threes, presented this in a large display and shared their findings with the class.
- 2.15 All pupils demonstrate an outstanding ability to settle and apply themselves in lessons and to persevere and enjoy their work and activities. Their perseverance was seen in a design and technology lesson where pupils made excellent progress in sewing with a needle and thread through their previously created tie-dyed material. In French, pupils enjoyed revisiting and applying an excellent range of accumulated vocabulary by creating their own sentences to include the names of animals and family members into locations of the farm, zoo or rooms of the house whilst playing a group board game.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.16 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is excellent, reflecting the school's aims of encouraging self-confidence and self-esteem. In the EYFS children's personal development is outstanding. They consider others' safety and understand how to play safely. This is a strength of the school and an area which has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- 2.17 Pupils have a considerable sense of spiritual well-being and a high level of self-esteem and self-confidence gained through a variety of means. In PSHE they are given opportunities to reflect on changes in their growing bodies, to recognise what they are good at and learn from their experiences. Pupils reflect on values such as being kind and helpful and how people feel in different situations through opportunities given in RE lessons and assemblies. They explore a range of feelings and moods and express these using abstract words, ideas and bodily movements exceptionally well in activities such as yoga. Certificates, stickers and the praise of teachers who value pupils comments contributes highly effectively to enhancing the pupils self-esteem and enabling them to gain in self-confidence.
- 2.18 Pupils throughout the school have a strongly developed moral sense and are able to distinguish right from wrong. The school promotes a strong and positive ethos which is underpinned by the importance placed in ensuring a happy community life. The school's values are displayed in the classrooms. The pupils understand and appreciate the various rewards and sanctions systems. In a PSHE lesson Year 1 pupils explored the reason for rules and successfully created their own rules to further aid their safety within the school. Their behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school encouraged by the high expectations of staff and the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. They learn about making the right choices and being fair, and ask without prompting, for example, "Shall we share?". They are happy to ask for help when it is needed.
- 2.19 Pupils show a high degree of social awareness. They take their leadership responsibilities seriously and clearly gain much self-esteem in the process. They carefully explain how they tidy up pots of pencils and the role they have as librarians. The interaction among pupils in the playground is excellent. Pupils across the age range play well together and use bicycles sensibly showing care for others around them. They talk about being supported by others if lonely on the playground and helping children younger than themselves, either by letting them join in a game of football or by helping them wash their hands. In lunchtime games activities, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were inclusive of others and enjoyed becoming part of several teams across the genders and ages, working very well together and managing winning and losing in their stride. They have a very good awareness of environmental issues with composting and recycling responsibilities being well established. Lunch times are social occasions where pupils eat their healthy snacks with staff in a friendly atmosphere in accordance with the school's aim to develop social and interpersonal skills. Pupils display an

appropriate understanding and knowledge of public institutions. They recognise the importance of people who help them and one pupil wrote a certificate to a doctor with the words, "Thank you for making everyone better."

- 2.20 Pupils develop a strong sense of their own and other cultures. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to explore and encounter other world faiths and cultures, and this is enhanced through visits and visitors, together with a broad programme of activities. French lessons enable pupils to speak exceptionally fluently, greeting each other proficiently, commenting on how they are and describing the weather accurately. They express themselves very well to music in yoga and listen to different composers during assemblies. Cookery lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to create dishes from other nationalities. Pupils are aware of different religious festivals and beliefs through RE, PSHE and assemblies. Pupils have celebrated Chinese New Year and visited a Chinese restaurant.
- 2.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.22 The quality of teaching is outstanding, a further improvement on the standards of the previous inspection. Every opportunity is taken to achieve the school's aims of developing and sustaining the pupils' natural enthusiasm for learning. Good practice identified in the planning and assessment of literacy and numeracy in the last inspection has been successfully extended to most other areas of the curriculum.
- 2.23 In all subjects, teaching enables pupils, including those with learning difficulties to acquire new knowledge, make progress according to their ability, increase their understanding and develop their skills. Those who are gifted and talented are equally well supported by their class teachers and teaching assistants. An understanding of pupils' learning needs and styles is evident in the open-ended questioning and suggestions effectively employed in lessons.
- 2.24 Staff in the EYFS provide good quality support for learning and development and know their children particularly well. Teaching across the Pre-Prep fosters in pupils an excellent ability to apply their growing intellectual, physical and creative effort into their work and play. Lively, purposeful teaching with clear learning objectives encourages the pupils to take interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves. Pupils demonstrate a high level of independence in moving from one activity to the next and make responsible judgements on how to complete their tasks well.
- 2.25 Teaching encourages and enables pupils to behave responsibly and enjoy learning. Teachers expect the pupils to work hard and they respond enthusiastically. The lessons are well paced and enable pupils to achieve the learning objectives. Teaching is significantly enhanced by the positive and friendly relationship between pupils and teachers. In a mathematics lesson, where an outside activity was spoiled by the weather, pupils acted sensibly, did not become distracted and on returning to the classroom refocused immediately on the lesson objectives.
- 2.26 Thorough long-term and medium-term planning guides teaching very successfully. Daily planning is adjusted during and at the end of the lesson, as assessments are made about how well the learning objectives are being met. Lessons contain an excellent progression of suitable activities to keep the pupils engaged and on task, challenging them to think for themselves. Excellent teaching reviews pupils' skills and knowledge and gives opportunity for them to apply prior learning. Teachers know their pupils' abilities and potential very well and understand how to enable their further learning.

- 2.27 Teachers have an excellent knowledge of the subjects and topics they are teaching. Staff training is regular and covers a range of curriculum areas and school management issues. Informal ways of sharing this training work effectively. Staff access the training offered by the local authority and cluster groups and recent interactive whiteboard training is particularly well used and contributes effectively to lessons.
- 2.28 A good range and quality of appropriate resources support teaching effectively. These include computers and published schemes of work for literacy and mathematics which are used in Years 1 and 2 with extension texts for those working above the level expected for their age. There is also a very well-stocked library, although this is not always used effectively to fully support learning.
- 2.29 Teachers regularly and accurately mark and assess pupils' work. Marking and oral feedback are usually done during the lesson and these give encouraging comments on how to make further progress. Assessment opportunities are identified in the planning for the majority of subjects such as history, geography and art. Information from assessment and monitoring records in mathematics, literacy and science are consistently used to support teachers' knowledge of their pupils' attainment and they are used particularly effectively to help them plan next steps in learning. This is seen in individual targets regarding punctuation, style and presentation written in exercise books and also in identifying a need to revisit some areas of practical mathematics in Year 2 following assessments that identified gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- 2.30 The school evaluates pupils' performance against national norms. It has very recently introduced a nationally recognised standardised measure of progress which it is intended will enable it to monitor how successfully its pupils perform, but this is not yet fully embedded in school practice. Teaching of a consistently high standard successfully fulfils the school's aims to prepare pupils for entry to their next school by enabling them to achieve significantly well.
- 2.31 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 and the school's attention to pupils' welfare, health and safety across the school is excellent. This maintains the standards of the previous inspection and fully supports the school's aims to support and nurture each child providing a happy relaxed and friendly atmosphere where children feel secure.
- 3.2 Provision for children's welfare in the EYFS is outstanding as all staff provide very strong support and guidance for ensuring the pupils are happy at school and feel thoroughly supported through the pastoral systems. All pupils in the school benefit from a safe, secure and very well-maintained environment. The constant encouragement of self-belief and confidence in all areas ensure excellent relationships between staff and pupils in the Pre-Prep. Success is recognised and shared constantly in lessons and in assemblies. In one lesson, pupils applauded a peer for correctly identifying an object whilst another later complimented another on his drawing technique. Particularly good support is offered to those pupils with learning difficulties and highly effective guidance and support is provided in preparation for transition to their next schools. Parents are very appreciative of the standards of care and welfare commenting, "The staff care for individuals and this gives them great confidence to take to their future schools."
- 3.3 Pastoral care is a high priority and the personal and academic needs of all pupils are reviewed constantly. The daily contact between the principal and all staff gives many opportunities for discussions, both formal and informal, about pupils' well-being. The form teacher maintains class and individual assessment records. The school is aware that aspects of pupils' personal records, whilst well known by all staff, are not always recorded systematically. The size of the school ensures high quality relationships between pupils. Manners are outstanding with pupils automatically thanking each other and their teachers as occasions arise. Clear guidelines and policies make provision for promoting excellent behaviour, preventing bullying and addressing it constructively should it occur. Different systems provide encouragement for good work, behaviour and effort, from stickers and certificates in assembly to the behaviour zone board found in Year 2.
- 3.4 Staff take care to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare, health and safety. A child protection policy is robust. All staff have undertaken training. Pupils are carefully supervised on and off site. Recruitment procedures to safeguard children are correctly undertaken. The admission and the daily registers are maintained properly. A range of measures ensures the safety of pupils and staff. Fire practices are organised and recorded, and fire-fighting equipment and alarms are checked on a regular basis. Staff are aware of their responsibilities towards health and safety. Formal records are kept of risk assessments, rules are displayed throughout the school advising children to take care on the stairs, to wash their hands before eating a snack, and children write signs for visitors asking them to be careful on the steps outside the school. Cross-curricular approaches enable pupils through PSHE and geography to develop their knowledge of road safety. School trips are carefully planned and assessments undertaken and evaluated. The school fulfils its duties under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 3.5 The school has written and implemented an appropriate first aid policy. Form teachers have paediatric first aid training and pupils taken ill are cared for appropriately in a suitable medical room. Topics on healthy eating provide pupils with an awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and this is reinforced in the provision by parents of a healthy snack at

lunch and playtime. The outdoor space is well used by pupils in all weathers and this alongside the curriculum provision enables pupils to exercise appropriately and with enjoyment.

- 3.6 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.7 The quality of links with parents is outstanding and those with the community are good. The school successfully meets its aim to create a happy, secure and stimulating environment where each child, regardless of gender, race, religion or family background, is taught to the best of his or her ability. Since the last inspection the school has further improved the information provided to parents.
- 3.8 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's life. They are extremely satisfied with teaching and the way in which it enables their child to make progress. Parents who had a discussion with inspectors confirmed that their children are very happy and confident, and pupils who talked with inspectors said that school was fun. In the EYFS, excellent relationships between parents and staff ensure that everyone involved in children's care and education is well informed.
- 3.9 Parents are pleased with the opportunities they are given to be involved in activities in the school and in the work and progress of their children. They are kept well informed through reading records which provide a method of daily communication. They receive a welcome pack when they join the school and a written curriculum review every term. New parents have a welcome meeting whilst all parents have the opportunity to attend parents evenings twice a year. Occasionally the school sends out guides to help parents extend reading or support handwriting in the home, and helpful educational information evenings are held. Homework is accompanied with advice on its completion. Parents contribute their expertise to the school for the benefit of the pupils by coming in, for example, to demonstrate musical instruments and help with the library. The parent teachers association holds functions to enable parents to socialise; most recently they have held a wine tasting evening and a quiz night to which members of the local community centre were also invited. Parents enjoy opportunities to watch their children perform, as at the Christmas concerts and end of year plays. Helpful and relevant information about the school is provided for parents, including a list of dates, newsletters, on the school's website and in the parents handbook located in the school. The school prospectus provides satisfactory information and is currently being reviewed. Reports to parents give detailed information about what the pupils have studied and the progress they have made, and include helpful pointers as to ways in which pupils can improve.
- 3.10 The school handles the concerns of parents with due care and parents are very confident that these would be dealt with immediately. There is an open door policy which parents recognise and appreciate. The principal makes herself available morning and evening in order to deal with any concerns. Teachers and parents email each other when required.
- 3.11 The school promotes positive links with the wider community. Good contacts have recently been made with a local community centre and pupils raised money from their Christmas concert to help fund a Christmas lunch for the elderly and those with disabilities. Local facilities including the library are used occasionally to extend learning. Visitors such as a dentist and a doctor have talked to pupils about aspects of their work in the wider community. The pupils support charities such as Comic Relief and Jeans for Genes and raise considerable amounts of money.

- 3.12 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 directors, one of whom is also the principal, help to set and secure appropriate aims and values for the school and provide effective oversight and guidance. Long experience of education for this age group and a deep commitment to the pupils, the school and its future development is apparent. As a result, the school achieves its aims of encouraging independence of thought, self-confidence and self-esteem and developing social and interpersonal skills.
- 4.2 Arrangements are clearly defined and support effective oversight of the school. The fact that the principal and two further family members are directors has many advantages, including that of being continually aware of the achievements of the school, its needs and the views of staff. The directors are closely involved in educational development and financial planning and ensure that investment in human and material resources is more than adequate. The advice of an accountant and of others with expert knowledge of the law and primary education is sought as necessary and is very helpful.
- 4.3 The directors are alert to everything happening in the school, and encourage every member of staff to give of their best for the benefit of the pupils. Good provision is made in advising and supporting members of staff to ensure growth and improvement. The proprietors endeavour to keep themselves abreast of all legal responsibilities to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Required policies are in place and are monitored by the principal.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 The principal has a clear vision for the school and has worked hard with her staff to create the strong ethos that makes the leadership and management of the school effective. The school successfully fulfils its aims of encouraging independence of thought, the development of social and interpersonal skills and a responsible attitude.
- 4.5 The high level of achievement of the pupils in class, the excellent quality of care for the pupils from all staff and their outstanding personal development reflect the successful educational direction and leadership provided by those with management responsibilities. Leadership and management in the EYFS are of high quality, seen in the children's positive response and progress. The commitment of staff has been an important factor in helping Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School to ensure that a high standard of education is provided for pupils.
- 4.6 Those with management responsibilities are effective in carrying out their duties. The Key Stage One co-ordinator and subject leaders generally have an excellent perspective of the progress of pupils in their subjects; planning is extremely thorough but development plans are not yet written. The school recognises that systematic procedures to monitor teaching and the curriculum right across the school are not fully in place. However, informal and some formal procedures are currently highly effective, ensuring that the educational provision is of a high quality. The recently written school development plan drawn together by all staff provides a useful basis for improvement but at present lacks a detailed structure for the longer-term overview and evaluation of the work of the school.

- 4.7 The principal and staff are effective in drawing up and implementing appropriate procedures and policies although, as the school is aware, review cycles are not yet fully established. Guidance on procedures provides clear information for staff and parents about all areas of school life, and contributes to the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
- 4.8 The support, development and motivation of staff are good. Teaching and non-teaching staff are highly committed to the school and to its aims. The school has been very successful in appointing high quality teaching staff and this, alongside the excellent staff to pupil ratio, greatly contributes to the outstanding quality of teaching and learning within the school. The system of performance management for staff, in its early stages of development, has not yet been fully established. The school has taken appropriate measures to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and directors to work with children. The school does not participate in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers. New staff are provided with useful induction information that supports them well.
- 4.9 The work of the school is exceptionally well supported by the school's administration team. The financial resources of the school are very well managed to secure appropriate accommodation and resources in support of its aims. The library is well stocked and managed but is not used fully to support teaching and learning. The school provides a happy environment for the pupils. Its outdoor facilities provide very effectively for educational and recreational play. Pupils are confident, and their parents say, "The children are so happy they learn effortlessly."
- 4.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims to encourage independence of thought by supporting and nurturing each child in a happy, relaxed and friendly atmosphere where children feel safe and secure. The EYFS provision is good; the setting provides children with a highly successful start to their education, recognising that each child is unique and catering for each child's individual development. Pupils in the Pre-Prep department learn and achieve very well because of a broad curriculum and the outstanding quality of the teaching. Pupils' personal development is excellent, supported by the exceptional pastoral care given by all members of staff. Strong links have been forged with parents and they are very positive about the educational experiences provided. Relationships throughout the school community are excellent. Leadership and management are effective. The monitoring of the educational provision lacks clarity and the school development plan is not sufficiently detailed. The school is aware of these issues and is already considering the way forward. It meets the needs of the pupils extremely well.
- 5.2 Progress since the last Ofsted inspection has been good with practice in planning and assessment now being strong in most areas of the curriculum. Lesson evaluations result in appropriate challenge being provided to the highest attaining pupils and communication to parents about their children's progress is now well established.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 To improve further the high quality of its educational provision, the school should take the following action.
1. Expand the school development plan to:
 - formalise structures to monitor the educational provision;
 - ensure that cycle is established for the review and evaluation of policies and procedures throughout the school.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE.

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 23rd to 26th March 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 23rd and 24th March 2009 by one inspector. The inspector observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and governors. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspector examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Sara Wiggins	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Marilyn Fenn	Head, IAPS School
Mr Graham Nunn	Early Years Lead Inspector

7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

- 7.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of a Nursery and a Reception group. The Nursery and Reception children are accommodated in the same building as the Pre-Prep department. Nursery children begin school, on a part-time basis, in the term in which they are three. All Reception children attend full-time. Overall, fifteen children attend full-time and 39 part-time. The Nursery has an almost equal number of boys and girls; in Reception there are considerably more boys than girls. Sufficient numbers of qualified teachers, aided by suitably qualified assistants, are in place. Subjects, such as French, information and communication technology, physical education, pottery and dance/drama are taught by specialist teachers. The aim of the EYFS is to provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment where each child is taught to the best of his/her ability.
- 7.2 The EYFS provision is good with some aspects being outstanding. The setting provides children with a highly successful start to their education, recognising that each child is unique and catering for each child's individual development. Leadership and management are of high quality and these, together with effective planning and very good teaching contribute significantly to its success. The provision for children's personal development is outstanding, as is the provision made for their welfare. Parents are exceptionally positive in their evaluation of the EYFS.
- 7.3 During their time in the EYFS children achieve well. On entering the Nursery they have a broad spread of ability. A significant amount of high quality teaching ensures their good progress towards the goals expected. This continues throughout the Reception year. By the end of Reception, most children attain the Early Learning Goals with many exceeding them. Children work well individually or in groups. Their literacy and numeracy skills are developing very well. Children are confident when given the opportunity to explore their environment and show their creativity when using different media and materials. Displays, such as the Chinese New Year display, completed by Nursery children, exemplify this.
- 7.4 Children's personal development is outstanding. They consider others' safety and understand well how to play safely. They realise the importance of staying healthy for, as one child said, 'I must eat lots of fruit every day'. Children know that they need to wash their hands after messy activities or when visiting the toilet in order to stay healthy. Physical skills are well developed by physical education activities. Children enjoy learning and, when given the opportunity, making choices. They are keen to answer questions, pay attention and are increasingly confident when answering. Teachers value children's contributions and celebrate their achievements. Children are friendly, having excellent relationships with each other and with adults. Most have a good understanding of the world outside school.
- 7.5 Children are helped to learn and develop well. Staff provide good quality support for their learning and development and know their children particularly well. Indoor areas are well resourced and organised and provide motivation for the wide range of activities. Outdoor learning areas are similarly well resourced and the school is working hard to develop its usage with the intention of providing a high quality learning environment for all areas of learning. Children's work is well planned by the teachers although, on occasions, insufficient opportunities are provided for children to be active, inquisitive and independent learners. Teaching is generally of high quality and children are appropriately challenged. Children are enthusiastic participators in their learning. Appropriate on-going assessments are used to guide their learning and staff meet regularly to plan their progress. The school recognises that it does not use the outcomes of the recently introduced nationally moderated assessments effectively enough to plan future work for their children. Children with learning

difficulties receive good additional help. Excellent relationships between parents and staff ensure that everyone involved in children's care and education is well informed; as one parent said, 'The staff are excellent, they know all the children really well.'

- 7.6 Provision for children's welfare is outstanding. They benefit from a safe, secure and very well-maintained environment. Each child's key person takes pride in their care and development and regularly shares information with that child's parents. Detailed risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed. Excellent procedures exist for the safe arrival and collection of the children. Children use the outdoor play areas safely. Systematic procedures are in place for sick children. Their welfare is further safeguarded through comprehensive child protection procedures. Children respond well to the setting's rules, realising that all behaviour has consequences.
- 7.7 Leadership and management are of high quality being reflected in children's positive response and progress. Planning and everyday management are particularly effective. Resources are well used. Staff work exceptionally hard to create a stimulating learning environment. Well-qualified staff expect a lot from the children and are most competent and caring. They work well as a team. The monitoring of teaching is developing appropriately. Professional development opportunities are good and outcomes are well used for continued improvements. Inclusive practice ensures that all children have their welfare needs met and achieve their potential, regardless of background.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.8 To improve further the good quality of provision the setting should:
1. further develop the use being made of the outdoor area, in order to exploit its potential as an environment for all areas of learning;
 2. widen the opportunities provided for children to be active, inquisitive and independent learners;
 3. extend the use of nationally standardised assessments across the EYFS and use the analysis of the outcomes of such assessments to plan future work and activities for the children.
- 7.9 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.