



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE PHOENIX SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Phoenix School

Full Name of School	<b>The Phoenix School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>202/6393</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1098657</b>		
Address	<b>The Phoenix School 36 College Crescent London NW3 5LF</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 7722 4433</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 7722 4601</b>		
Email Address	<b>thephoenix@ucs.org.uk</b>		
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Lisa Mason-Jones</b>		
Chairman of Governing Council	<b>The Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 7</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>134</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (77 boys; 57 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS):</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>5-7: 58</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total:</b>	<b>134</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Caroline Edwards</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed (40 boys; 36 girls)</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>07 Dec 2010 to 08 Dec 2010 17 Jan 2011 to 19 Jan 2011</b>		

## 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. This is the school's first ISI inspection.

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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>4</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management	10
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	11
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>12</b>
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	13
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>14</b>

## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 The Phoenix School is located in College Crescent, Hampstead. The school was founded in 1994 as a proprietorially owned nursery and pre-preparatory school, and joined the University College School (UCS) Foundation of Schools in 2002. Phoenix pupils use the information and communications technology (ICT) suite and library at the Junior Branch and the swimming pool and theatre at the Senior School. They also use the UCS sports fields nearby for physical education (PE) lessons.
- 1.2 The Phoenix, as part of the UCS Foundation of Schools, maintains the Benthamite tradition to education, having as a fundamental principle that religion, in any form, should neither be an entry requirement nor a taught subject, believing rather that faith is a matter for the family and the individual.
- 1.3 Over recent years the school has developed into a two-form entry with 134 pupils currently on roll, 76 of whom are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and who include 43 children attending on a part-time basis. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Ten pupils are identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), and four pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with at least three-quarters of pupils being of at least above average ability, some far above. Results in national tests at age 7 have been far above the national average for maintained primary schools. Boys and girls are prepared for 7+ Assessment. Most boys proceed to the Junior Branch of UCS following 7+ Assessment with external candidates. Places have also been obtained by Phoenix boys at other highly selective independent schools in the London area. Most girls transfer to selective independent schools in the vicinity. Pupils normally obtain places their first choice schools.
- 1.5 The school's catchment area is very local. Parental occupations reflect the local community; a large number are engaged in finance, law or medicine.
- 1.6 The governing body of the UCS Foundation of Schools is known as the Council. The members of Council are the trustees of UCS. The Phoenix Board is delegated by the Council to oversee matters of governance particular to the Phoenix School.
- 1.7 The school was inspected by Ofsted in November 2006. Since then, IAPS accreditation has been obtained. This is the school's first inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

- 1.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Cygnets	Nursery
Ducklings	Nursery
Sparrows	Nursery
Woodpeckers	Reception
Penguins	Reception

***Infant Department***

School	NC name
Hummingbirds	Year 1
Nightingales	Year 1
Barn Owls	Year 2
Tawny Owls	Year 2

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards, pupils are very well educated and achieve high standards in both their learning and their personal development. They make good and, on occasion, rapid progress in relation to their abilities because of a broad curriculum, an excellent programme of activities both in and outside school, and most effective teaching, which in many lessons is outstanding. The school successfully achieves its aim to provide a happy, supportive and stimulating environment where intellectual curiosity and independence of mind are developed and self-discovery and self-expression are fostered. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for gifted and talented pupils, is fully integrated into the curriculum. The pupils' excellent attitudes to their work also contribute to their academic achievement, as do their exemplary behaviour and their extremely good relationships with each other and their teachers.
- 2.2 Excellent pastoral care, effective welfare arrangements and robust health and safety procedures underpin the outstanding personal development of pupils. They are confident, articulate and eager to learn, approaching their lessons with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Pupils' care for each other is embedded in all aspects of school life. They are extremely tolerant and respectful of each other's differences and collaborate very well when working together. Older pupils develop supportive relationships with younger pupils. Staff provide excellent support and guidance, making pupils feel valued as individuals; pupils say that there is always someone to whom they can talk. Pupils' keen interest in being responsible citizens is evident in their charitable giving and their desire to be an eco-friendly school.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is good and enables it to meet its aims effectively. Governors' clear oversight of the school is well informed and ensures the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils well. Leadership and management are good and support effectively the high quality education pupils receive. Curriculum planning is excellent and coordinators manage their subjects well. Their leadership role in the monitoring of teaching and learning in the individual subjects is not yet fully developed. Staff recruitment procedures are rigorous in all the required checks. Links with parents are excellent. Parents are most appreciative of the high standards their children achieve, and of the nurturing care and support they receive. Reports to parents are detailed and comprehensive and indicate what their children need to do to improve.
- 2.4 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.5 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:
- fit finger guards to the doors of the Octagon classroom in the Nursery [Part 5, paragraph (i), under Premises and accommodation].
- 2.6 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**

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Share best practice in teaching by introducing peer lesson observation across the curriculum and age groups.
  2. Continue to develop the role of subject co-ordinators, especially in leadership and monitoring the curriculum.
  3. Ensure that planning in the EYFS includes use of the outside environment for all areas of learning.
  4. Use all assessment data, including the EYFS Profile, to analyse EYFS children's strengths and areas for development.



### **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 school's aim of enabling all children to reach their full academic potential in a happy, supportive and stimulating environment is met effectively. From the EYFS onwards, the pupils are highly successful in their learning and personal development and achieve extremely well in relation to their age and capabilities. In the national tests at the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are far above the average for all maintained primary schools, and the annual standardised tests in mathematics and English show that good progress is maintained in relation to their above average ability profile.
- 3.2 Pupils display high levels of skill in literacy throughout all areas of the school, reading, speaking and writing confidently for a variety of purposes. For example, in Year 1 lessons pupils displayed excellent phonological awareness, and were able to make links between sound and letter patterns and to apply a clear structure when organising their writing. Mature speaking and listening skills were evident in interviews with pupils and in lessons. Pupils of all ages listen carefully to what others say and treat their answers with respect. The presentation of pupils' work is of a high standard.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve well in numeracy, and display commendable levels of understanding of number, calculations and problem solving. They are able to apply their knowledge and understanding effectively in a variety of situations. For example, in a Year 1 lesson a group of pupils working collaboratively to investigate odd and even numbers were able to explain the rule and to recognise the resulting number pattern. Pupils develop ICT skills well and use these skills effectively in all curricular areas, as evidenced by work in books and classroom displays. Scientific knowledge and skills are strong, and pupils use scientific vocabulary with confidence. They achieve high levels of creativity, which is encouraged from an early age through music, art and drama. Excellent displays around the school covering a wide range of their creative work demonstrate high standards and much individuality.
- 3.4 Achievements of all kinds are strongly encouraged and celebrated. Pupils regularly show that they can work collaboratively when presenting to their peers during assemblies and when performing together in the twice-yearly productions at the Lund Theatre which showcase their singing, dancing and acting talents. The well-supported extra-curricular programme offers pupils the opportunities to achieve high levels of success in a range of activities including sport, taekwondo, chess, choir, art, ballet, and gymnastics.
- 3.5 Well-planned lessons and effective teaching, much of it outstanding, contribute significantly to the good progress pupils make. The evidence from lessons and work scrutinised during the inspection supports this judgement. Pupils with LDD and those identified with EAL make at least good, and often rapid, progress as they move through the school.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages are able to work and play effectively both on their own and co-operatively with others in groups and teams. From a very young age they settle easily to work and apply themselves well in their tasks and activities often with remarkable concentration. Pupils show great enthusiasm for their lessons and activities and clearly enjoy their school. As a result they progress well and achieve high standards.

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

- 3.7 The curriculum is designed carefully to reflect the aims of the school. It includes a good range of subjects with enough time for each, and has an effective impact on pupils' academic achievement and personal development. The curriculum provides pupils of all abilities with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education. In addition to all National Curriculum subjects, it includes French and personal, social, and health education (PSHE). The quality of the pupils' learning is further enhanced by specialist teaching in music, art, design and technology, PE and French, and by use of the facilities provided for sport, ICT and library at both the Junior Branch and Senior School.
- 3.8 The pupils' learning is enhanced by the use of cross-curricular themes and there is a strong emphasis on creativity in all subjects. The high quality displays around the school are testimony to the breadth of the curriculum and to the pupils' enthusiasm and success in their learning, both in the classroom and in extra-curricular visits. Information and communications technology is used well to enhance and support the pupils' learning across the curriculum, and themed occasions such as a recent art workshop on mosaics and a Number Day, focused on practical skills, enrich the pupils' experience further. Pupils' musical abilities are fostered effectively by the many opportunities provided to learn to play a musical instrument.
- 3.9 The curriculum is planned well, ensuring continuity of education and progress in all subjects for all ages, abilities and needs. Children identified as having LDD are very well provided for. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and their learning is extended appropriately within the classroom and during extra-curricular activities.
- 3.10 The school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities which are well supported by pupils and provide opportunities for them to pursue their interests in music, sport and chess. The wide range of trips and visitors to school is an excellent enhancement to the pupils' experiences. For example, a visit to the Imperial War Museum stimulated much learning for Year 2 pupils, resulting in exceptionally high standards of writing. Pupils benefit from strong links with the local community, including visits to the local fire station and from the police. They are introduced to local parks for scientific observations and visit a bookshop for story sessions. Pupils' horizons are extended, and their understanding of the needs of others enhanced, by their links to a school in India and by their charity collections to support a number of national and international charities.

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

- 3.11 The pupils' achievements are strongly promoted by well-informed, interesting and helpful teaching, most of which is excellent. Teaching is a strength of the school and a major factor in helping pupils to develop their academic potential in line with the school's aims. Pupils enjoy a highly productive rapport with their teachers, and all lessons are characterised by an air of mutual respect. As a result of positive encouragement, pupils remain focused, and exemplary behaviour is the norm.
- 3.12 Detailed planning and effective classroom practice ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities make at least good progress in line with their capabilities. A wide variety of teaching methods are employed using high quality and exciting resources. Teaching assistants support the pupils' learning well, and interactive whiteboards are used imaginatively. Across the school the teachers' comprehensive subject knowledge is used well to promote progress, as exemplified in a Year 2 music lesson in which teaching enabled pupils to succeed in rapidly improving individual levels of skill whilst working with recorders.
- 3.13 In most lessons, teaching is inspiring and imaginative, demonstrating an understanding of individual learning needs and styles, and encouraging pupils to think for themselves, enabling them to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well. These lessons are characterised by effective time management, with clear learning objectives and criteria for success identified and shared with the pupils at the start of each lesson. The plenary sessions in these lessons provide pupils with the information on how successful they have been, and what they now need to do to move their learning forward.
- 3.14 The needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties are met with sensitivity and understanding within the classroom. Teachers utilise the excellent guidance provided by specialist staff well to adapt work to meet all individual needs.
- 3.15 The assessment of progress during lessons is excellent. Teachers use the information they gain from observing and questioning pupils to inform their planning for individual needs. They challenge the more able suitably and expect more of them. The quality of marking is of a high standard. It is regular and thorough, and is understood by the pupils who consider it helpful and encouraging. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers use a variety of informal methods to check the pupils' knowledge and understanding within the classroom, including written and oral tests, quizzes and end of topic mini-assessments. The school uses nationally standardised measures of progress in English and mathematics to identify the pupils' progress. The data from these assessments is carefully analysed and the results shared with teachers, who integrate them into planning documentation successfully.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' personal development remains, as at the previous inspection, excellent. Pupils of all ages, including the children in the EYFS, show well-developed personal qualities and are friendly and confident. The school is successful in its aim to promote pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 4.2 Whilst the school's philosophy is that religion is a matter for the home and family, pupils have a well-developed sense of the spiritual. They are self-aware and many are confident and outgoing. They sing well in assemblies, and enter fully into the spirit of an occasion. They have an appreciation for what is beautiful and admirable, for example, looking at art work and sculpture. They are sensitive to the wonders of nature, such as the colours of the spectrum and the workings of a carnivorous plant. They respond reflectively to the joy and sorrow in the stories they encounter and have sympathy for those suffering bullying and hardship.
- 4.3 The school successfully engenders a strong moral code through its ethos and curriculum and through staff acting as very good role models. Pupils throughout the school are able to demonstrate an understanding of right from wrong from an early age. Clear routines enable very young children to understand the behaviour looked for in a nursery setting. They learn to share and consider the needs of others in their activities and at snack times. Pupils are guided by the school's 'golden rules' and its positive behaviour policy. Keenly sought rewards such as the good manners cup foster co-operation and exemplary behaviour. The school encourages pupils to think of others and leads them in a wide range of charitable fund-raising for causes both local and in the wider community. These opportunities further develop pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. They interact with each other with tolerance and mutual respect. Pupils clearly support each other well, valuing the varied strengths and qualities within the peer group. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils were able to write sentences to describe the qualities they value most in their friendships. In Year 2, pupils enjoy taking on small responsibilities and take a mature responsibility for the younger pupils, both through the structure of the buddy system, and in the playground and around the school. Pupils are extremely aware of their responsibilities to the environment, as evidenced by their interest in recycling, the school's Bronze Eco award, and the travel plan initiative. Pupils have a sound working knowledge of public institutions and services through PSHE lessons.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is strongly developed and they have a tolerant attitude towards those from different cultural backgrounds, both among their fellow pupils and in the wider community. They learn to recognise and value diversity and difference. The full programme of educational visits and visitors to school helps to build pupils' appreciation of their own traditions and cultures.

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

- 4.6 The pastoral care of pupils is excellent and staff provide outstanding support and guidance for all pupils, fostering their personal development extremely well in line with the school's aims. The arrangements for the care of pupils, based upon the form teacher, are clear and effective. Staff discuss individual pupils' concerns at staff meetings and detailed written records are kept.
- 4.7 The school has clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies and pupils are confident that the staff would quickly deal with any unacceptable behaviour. Frequent opportunities are taken in class and assemblies to reinforce positive attitudes to behaviour and mutual care and responsibility between pupils.
- 4.8 The safeguarding policy is robust and is implemented successfully. All staff receive regular training to ensure that their awareness of child protection matters is at a high level. The designated child protection officers have received the higher level training.
- 4.9 Comprehensive fire prevention measures are in place and there are regular fire practices. The school has undertaken thorough fire risk assessments and carries out the required checks on fire safety equipment. Risk assessments are well conducted for all areas of the school and identified hazards to pupils are mostly identified and dealt with immediately. At the time of the initial inspection visit there were no finger guards on the doors to the Octagon classroom in the EYFS. By the final inspection visit this omission had been rectified.
- 4.10 Suitable provision is made for pupils who are ill and the appropriate first aid training is carried out. Records are maintained with care. The school has an appropriate plan to improve access for those with disabilities. The admission and attendance registers have been maintained correctly.
- 4.11 Pupils bring a packed lunch from home but are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. They understand the need to stay safe and take regular exercise on their timetable.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the Phoenix School is good, and is successful in upholding the ethos of the school underpinned by the Benthamite philosophy. The UCS Council is the central governing body overseeing all three schools. Matters of governance specific to the Phoenix School are also dealt with by the directors of the Phoenix Board, who are all members of the Council of the UCS Foundation. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents who took part indicated that they were fully satisfied with the governance of the school.
- 5.2 Governors have a wide range of expertise and experience, and a number have longstanding links with the school. They provide informed support for the regulatory standards, developments and future needs of the school. Reports from the headmistress and the governors' own links with the school all give an appropriate insight into its working. The recently formed education committee which focuses on the specific educational provision of the Junior Branch and the Phoenix School is providing governors with further information about the educational side of school life.
- 5.3 Governors discharge their duties and responsibilities concerning child protection, safeguarding and the welfare health and safety of pupils effectively. Their overseeing of the systematic review, evaluation and updating of policies and procedures prepared by senior managers enables them to check that academic and legislative requirements are met. They attend suitable training, especially in the area of safeguarding.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is good. The strength of the educational experience, high standards of achievements, the exemplary care of the pupils, the successful fulfilment of the school's aims and the overwhelming support of the parents as reflected in the pre-inspection questionnaire, all indicate leadership and management which provide clear educational direction and a dedicated and responsive staff. Membership of the Foundation's senior management team enables the headmistress to promote and support effective communication and co-operation between the schools. It also allows each school to be aware of the others' needs and to share a whole school vision.
- 5.5 The evaluation of the school's current position shows that senior managers are aware of the next steps needed to develop further the present high quality of education. All staff are involved in the school's development plan, which identifies areas for development in most aspects of the school.
- 5.6 Senior managers are successful in securing high quality staff and in ensuring, through the annual appraisal system and attendance at relevant courses, that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all children, in safeguarding and in welfare, health and safety.
- 5.7 The curriculum is managed by subject co-ordinators who demonstrate good knowledge and a clear oversight of their subjects. However, their roles and responsibilities are not always sufficiently developed to include leadership in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the individual subjects.

- 5.8 On a day-to-day basis the school runs very smoothly. Teaching, non-teaching, welfare and administrative staff effectively support the ethos of the school. They work together with the pupils to create an excellent sense of community, and take pride and pleasure in their school.
- 5.9 The appropriate care is taken over all aspects of staff recruitment, such as checks on suitability and the recording of these checks, as well as ensuring effective staff induction, and all other necessary policies and risk assessments are in place.

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

- 5.10 The excellent links with parents, carers and guardians noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and enhanced. The school takes considerable care to communicate effectively with parents and involve them in the life of the school. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that the majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about, and supportive of, the school. They commented most favourably on the teaching and nurturing care and support that their children receive, and on the high standards that they are enabled to achieve.
- 5.11 Parents have ample opportunity to be involved in the life of the school. They are often involved in educational visits, and receive invitations to a wide range of events, such as viewing lessons and clubs and attending welcome meetings, sports activities, school productions and concerts. Charity events organised by the school are well supported by parents and there is a thriving Parents' Guild which encourages all parents to be involved further in the school and provides valuable links with the UCS Foundation.
- 5.12 All necessary information, including policies and procedures, is posted on the school website and parents of pupils or prospective pupils are provided with extensive and relevant information about the school.
- 5.13 Parents receive thorough feedback on their children's achievement and progress. Reports are detailed and comprehensive. In response to the previous inspection, reports now contain individual targets to inform parents of what their child now needs to do to improve. Parents of pupils in Year 2 are supported effectively in their children's transition to the next stage of their education by meetings to discuss options with the headmistress and form teacher.
- 5.14 The school operates an open door policy and parents are encouraged to come into school to discuss any problems. As a result the vast majority of concerns can be dealt with swiftly and informally. The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. There have been no formal complaints in the past two years and the school handles any concerns with sensitivity.

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

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

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

6.1 The overall effectiveness of EYFS is good. The setting is successful in achieving its aims to meet the individual needs of all children. The EYFS is an important part of the school community and children learn and develop well through stimulating play and exciting first-hand experiences. Children enjoy school and participate enthusiastically. Dedicated staff know children very well and use sensitive observations to plan the next steps for learning. Very strong partnerships with parents and outside agencies support the setting and the children demonstrate a mature awareness of their needs and those of others. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and recent self-evaluation demonstrates a good awareness of areas for future development.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good. Enthusiastic and hardworking staff are focused on helping all children to make good progress in their learning and personal development. Effective safeguarding procedures, risk assessments and welfare, health and safety policies are in place. Appointment checks are thorough. Policies and procedures to promote equality and eliminate discrimination are implemented well. The setting supports requests for further training and information is effectively disseminated. The school development plan incorporates ideas from EYFS staff and sets realistic targets and criteria for success. Strong links with outside agencies including the local authority enhance training opportunities and support teaching and learning effectively. Pre-inspection questionnaires indicate that parents are extremely supportive of the school and that they particularly appreciate the care and support their children receive.

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

6.3 The provision is good overall and many elements are outstanding. The children are motivated to learn through an environment which is stimulating and caring. The adults are highly skilled; they interact with the children exceptionally well, encouraging creativity, provoking thought and scaffolding the children's learning. Indoor activities are planned purposefully and effectively. There are plenty of opportunities for child-initiated activity; however, planning for outdoor learning is not fully embedded into the curriculum. Initial and ongoing observational assessment supports children's learning effectively and the information gained is used well to plan the children's 'next steps' for learning. Key people promote the children's health, hygiene and safety effectively. Relationships with the children and their parents are a strength of the setting. Staff manage the children's behaviour extremely well and with consistency and sensitivity. They are very good role models skilled in mediating disputes and in encouraging positive attitudes. Resources are plentiful and of a high quality.



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

- 6.4 Outcomes are good with elements that are outstanding. Results from the EYFS Profile and other assessment data indicate that children make good progress in relation to their starting points across all areas of learning. Results are used effectively as a starting point for individuals on entry to Year 1; however, they are not analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses to improve the quality of teaching and learning overall. Those with EAL are assisted well in developing their understanding. The children show sustained concentration and enjoyment. They are mostly articulate and confident, enthusiastically offering ideas and making connections between areas of learning. They show high levels of independence and responsibility for managing the class environment. ICT is used with assurance. Children show respect and empathy for each other; they share concerns confidently, help each other and have very good dispositions and attitudes to learning. Children from different backgrounds and cultures work and play in harmony. The children are developing a very good understanding of what it means to be safe and healthy, and they can be relied on to use the tools and equipment sensibly.

**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 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 to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Felicity Lawson	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Loraine Cavanagh	Head, IAPS School
Mrs Jane Crouch	Head, IAPS School
Mrs Gillian Bilbo	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector
Mrs Tessa Richardson	Early Years Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS School)