



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

PARKSIDE SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

FINAL VISIT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Parkside School

Full Name of School	Parkside School
DCSF Number	936/6020
EYFS Number	EY393004
Registered Charity Number	312041
Address	Parkside School The Manor Stoke d'Abernon Cobham Surrey KT11 3PX
Telephone Number	01932 862749
Fax Number	01932 860251
Email Address	enquiries@parkside-school.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr David Aylward
Chair of Governors	Mr Graham West
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	390
Gender of Pupils	Boys
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 25 5-11: 202 3-5 (EYFS): 68 11-18: 95
Number of Day Pupils	390
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection date/EYFS	22 Feb 2010 to 23 Feb 2010
Final (team) visit	22 Mar 2010 to 24 Mar 2010

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 January 2004.

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 31st 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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommended action	4
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(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)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management	11
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	12
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	14
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	15
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	16

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Parkside School is an independent preparatory school for 390 pupils aged two to thirteen years. The school, founded in 1879, is situated in Stoke d'Abernon close to the town of Cobham in Surrey. It is surrounded by extensive grounds and playing fields, and occupies a large historic house with additional educational buildings accommodating pupils in Reception to Year 8. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) incorporates a nursery, which accommodates boys and girls aged two to four-and-half years in their own accommodation with adjacent play areas, and boys aged four to five in the pre-preparatory department. Extended day care is provided from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon from nursery upwards.
- 1.2 The school is governed by a board of eleven members to whom the headmaster reports. The school seeks to develop the pupils academically, physically, emotionally and spiritually whilst allowing them to develop as individuals within a structured, challenging yet supportive environment. It aims to prepare pupils for each new challenge and in particular to prepare them for life. Since the previous inspection extensive refurbishment has taken place in many teaching areas including science, art, music, a newly appointed library and the building of a performing arts hall. Outside developments have included the refurbishment of indoor and outdoor cricket nets, the pre-prep playground and three new tennis courts.
- 1.3 Pupils are not entered for national tests. Standardised test information confirms that the ability profile of the pupils is broadly in line with the national average, with some well above and others below. Sixty-four pupils require some degree of learning support, including seven pupils who require additional support with their English and two pupils who have statements of special educational needs. The school follows the special needs Code of Practice for such pupils. The majority of pupils have white British home backgrounds. They come from families with wide-ranging occupational backgrounds and most live within a short drive of the school. The school provides a bus service for those living further away.

- 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

School	NC name
Nursery	EYFS
Pre-Prep1	EYFS

Pre-preparatory Department

School	NC name
Pre-Prep 2	Year 1
Pre-Prep 3	Year 2

Preparatory Department

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 3
Form 2	Year 4
Form 3	Year 5
Form 4	Year 6
Form 5	Year 7
Form 6	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Parkside School provides a happy, harmonious learning environment in which good care is taken to ensure all pupils are valued and have the same opportunities. Consequently pupils achieve well in relation to their ability. The stimulating curriculum inspires the pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils are suitably prepared for their future lives, thoroughly enjoy school and are proud of all that they do. Children make good progress in the EYFS. This is built upon well as pupils move through the school, and by the time they leave standards are often significantly above those expected for their age. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and are highly motivated. This, together with their positive relationships with teachers and one another and their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their academic achievement.
- 2.2 The pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflects the high priority the school gives to their well-being. Consequently they grow up as sociable, mature young people. The systems in place for pastoral care enable staff to provide good support for individuals. Pupils show initiative, work well together and understand how they can contribute to community life. They acquire clear values and beliefs and show immense respect for the lives and differences of others.
- 2.3 The school's aims and core values are clearly articulated. The school, including the EYFS, benefits considerably from strong and experienced leadership which, together with a conscientious and capable senior management team, is effective in the fulfilment of the school's aims and aspirations. Governors provide strong support for the school and are deeply committed to the school's continuing development. Strong leadership and successful management foster the pupils' excellent personal development and high quality achievements. However, the implementation and monitoring of teaching and assessment policies is not sufficiently rigorous as there are some inconsistencies in these areas. Since the time of the previous inspection the school has made significant improvements to the balance of the curriculum, particularly with respect to the promotion of information, communication technology (ICT), personal social and health education (PSHE), and artistic and expressiveness throughout the school. It has taken appropriate action to rectify the recent regulatory shortcomings. A high priority is placed on creating a family atmosphere in which all pupils are well known and valued. The school values the opinions of parents and pupils and acts upon these. Responses from the parent questionnaire indicate that parents are highly supportive. They particularly value the teaching, curriculum and the values the school promotes. A small number of concerns were raised relating to learning difficulties, homework and raising concerns with the school. Inspection findings do not support these views.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended, and therefore it was required to:
- ensure all appointment checks are completed and fully recorded before appointments are confirmed [Regulations 4.(2)(a),4C.(2)(a),4C.(3)] under suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors.
 - for the same reason, ensure that the safeguarding policy is always fully implemented [Regulation 3.(2)(b), under welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had taken all possible action to rectify the above shortcomings, and it had adopted correct procedures for an appointment made since the time of the initial visit.
- 2.6 The school's registered provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006 and no action was required.

Since the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is inspected under a different system of regulation, within a two-day limit, the report cannot mention any regulatory deficiencies which are remedied by the end of the standard inspection.

(ii) Recommended action

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Continue to develop the system for monitoring the work of the school, to further inform the quality of teaching pupils receive and the work they produce.
 2. Consistently develop procedures to track the progress of pupils and ensure that the outcomes of assessment are used to provide appropriate work for pupils of all abilities.
 3. Further develop monitoring and evaluation to guide improvement across the EYFS.

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 above average, and pupils make good progress in relation to their ability at entry. They achieve good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of ability, thus meeting the school's aim to offer a stimulating education in which high expectations and a broad range of opportunities encourage pupils to make the most of their abilities. The school has made significant progress in developing ICT skills across the curriculum, a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.2 Pupils are well grounded in knowledge, understanding and skills in all that they do, and have learned to apply these skills as well as thinking and acting creatively and critically. They demonstrate positive, enthusiastic attitudes to their work and activities, and display good levels of independent thought and initiative.
- 3.3 Strong foundations are laid in the younger year groups for the development of literacy skills, which are built upon in later years. As pupils move through the school, they read and write with increasing fluency and for a widening range of purposes; much of this writing is of a high standard. Pupils are articulate and confident, and they use language to great effect; they state points of view fluently and discuss topics in a sophisticated fashion. They participate confidently and fully in a range of activities, dramatic performances and speaking and listening competitions. Overall, pupils display good mathematical skills, not only in numeracy and mathematics lessons but also in other curriculum areas, such as project work involving graphical presentation and analysis of data. Pupils are encouraged to be creative within their work with particularly good examples seen in technology, English, music and art.
- 3.4 In keeping with its objectives the school enables pupils to develop intellectually and to achieve well. Children are on course to achieve or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. Pupils build well on these secure foundations as they move through the school. They make good and sometimes exceptional progress in relation to their ability profile which is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils often achieve high levels of success in their Common Entrance examinations, and a significant number are awarded scholarships. Some pupils progress to selective senior schools. The pupils' success in academic work, sport, art and performing arts can be attributed to their excellent positive attitudes, the quality of relationships throughout the school and often high quality teaching.

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

- 3.5 The curricular provision of the school is excellent. The strong curriculum, enhanced by outstanding extra-curricular activities and beneficial links with the community, fully supports the aim of encouraging pupils to develop their particular skills and talents to the full. In response to the previous inspection report, the school has improved significantly the overall quality of artistic and expressive provision. In addition, it has further developed its programme of personal social and health education (PSHE) and this is an area of increasing strength.
- 3.6 The curriculum meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. The school has in place a comprehensive special educational needs policy. The support provided to

pupils with learning difficulties is well organised; careful records are maintained and effective individual educational plans are written and applied. Individual objectives are instigated through initial assessments for all pupils from Year 2 and above, which are regularly monitored and updated. The school determines the course of action in consultation with outside professional bodies, if appropriate, and with parents. Those with special talents or skills are supported in their particular field and given challenging activities or assignments.

- 3.7 Children in the EYFS benefit from a broad range of stimulating activities across all areas of learning. Throughout the rest of the school the broad and balanced curriculum, covering all required aspects, is enriched by numerous cross-curricular initiatives. It provides additional breadth and depth through specialist teaching and the early introduction of specialist subjects. Pupils enjoy good opportunities, both in and out of class, to practise and develop listening and speaking skills. Discussion is a major feature of many lessons, both during whole-class debate and when smaller groups explore different issues in preparation for presentations. Pupils also take part actively in assemblies, a range of dramatic activities and external speech and drama events. Numeracy and literacy skills are promoted effectively across subjects. The school values creativity highly, encouraging it strongly in all age groups and for all abilities. It features across the curriculum, and is evident in a wealth of imaginative and visually stimulating displays that support the pupils' learning. In the performing arts, drama and music are used well to extend pupils and encourage personal growth.
- 3.8 In accordance with the school's aim and ethos of encouraging pupils to explore, discover and develop their skills, a particularly strong platform for learning is created through thoughtful cross-curricular planning, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. Varied activities enable pupils to pursue many interests. Music, dance, art, drama and design technology offer creative outlets whilst cricket, football, rugby and swimming offer opportunities to develop physical skills. Chess promotes personal development and the art club challenges the creative mind. Provision for games is excellent. Extensive outdoor facilities, including a swimming pool, vast array of pitches and academy provision for cricket, swimming, tennis and hockey enable the school to offer a challenging and varied programme of sports and games. Staff are highly committed to the sports programme and provide expert teaching and coaching, enabling a significant number of pupils to enjoy competing against one another and against other schools. Pupils benefit from opportunities to enhance learning through careful cross-curricular planning that extends to educational visits, as well as classroom activities. The range of extra-curricular activities contributes extremely positively to the pupils' personal development. The school successfully provides open relationships, which emphasise collaboration, co-operation and trust, and to maintain frequent contact and good relationships with the local community.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 The good quality of teaching, together with the positive relationships between staff and pupils, promotes successful learning throughout the school in line with its aims. Careful planning in schemes of work and solid classroom practice ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress.
- 3.10 Staff enjoy a highly productive rapport with pupils, and lessons are characterised by an air of mutual respect. As a result of positive encouragement, pupils remain focused and good behaviour is the norm. During lessons, skilful questions probe understanding and encourage independent thinking and discussion. The pupils' responses are treated with respect and encouragement, ensuring that no one is afraid to question or offer opinions. Teachers generally demonstrate excellent knowledge of their subjects, which fosters the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort. They are enthusiastic and conscientious and, in the best lessons, their passion and energy inspire and challenge all of the pupils. Particularly high expectations were evident in the upper years. Occasionally, where there is no clear focus and objective for the lesson, pupils do not make sufficient progress. Teachers generally make effective use of resources, including ICT.
- 3.11 Teachers know their pupils and on the whole understand their aptitudes, needs and prior attainments. They are well informed by the learning support department, and the excellent quality individual educational plans (IEPs) promote an awareness of individuals' strengths and weaknesses. Suitable structures are in place for the evaluation of work, and teaching is informed by a variety of tests and standardised assessments. However, they are not always monitored or acted upon with sufficient regularity or rigour to ensure that they are fully effective. Where rigorous assessment procedures for learning are in place the highest achievement is found. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Some of the best practice ensures targets are set at the end of individual pieces of work and employs checklists for pupils, so that they can ensure they have covered all the aspects and objectives required.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent, and reflects the school's total commitment to this aspect of education. The school is highly successful in its aim to promote values of respect, tolerance and compassion whilst encouraging self-reliance and independence. Consequently, since the previous inspection, the pupils' personal development has been strengthened to the present exceptional quality.
- 4.2 From the youngest age, pupils demonstrate a high level of self-confidence and self-esteem. Throughout the school, confidence is strongly encouraged and is clearly evident in the way the pupils readily talk to visitors about life at their school. Several pupils displayed considerable poise when they gave musical recitals. Pupil participation is encouraged in assemblies when pupils explore and think about the spiritual aspects of life. In religious education lessons (RE), they develop a deeper knowledge of themselves when they discuss how Christian values might be applied in everyday life. Older pupils demonstrate an excellent awareness of ethical issues in their Common Entrance work. Pupils talk with sensitivity and reflection when discussing past and present wars and the relevance of the poppy as a symbol. They understand that people have different beliefs and customs and displays around the school further demonstrate the pupils' knowledge and tolerance of other faiths.
- 4.3 The school's ethos of mutual trust and respect enables pupils to develop a strong moral sense of right and wrong. This is reinforced by the 'Pussdog code', which emphasises consideration for others and is respected by the pupils. Pupils understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour. Staff and older pupils are excellent role models. Consequently, pupils grow to see the value of being responsible citizens who consider the needs of others. Pupils sensibly discuss moral issues in lessons, particularly in English, RE, and science as well as in assemblies and tutor times. The school thrives on goodwill and co-operation and this in turn enables pupils throughout the school to develop a strong moral code.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils understand that they are part of a community and show respect for and tolerance of each other's differences. Relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are outstanding. Pupils work together and share learning experiences while enjoying each other's company. They have opportunities to participate in residential visits, which broaden their social experience through learning to live together, while developing independence. In the wider context, the pupils' knowledge of public institutions and services is appropriate at every level. Pupils show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life by taking on responsibility. For example, older pupils help supervise younger pupils. Pupils' understanding of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves is enhanced by their support for local charities and others as far afield as Malawi, Haiti and Uganda.

4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is strongly developed. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about and appreciate cultural traditions from their own and other's backgrounds. In assemblies, and subjects such as RE, geography, history, English and languages, pupils consider their own cultures and those of others which help them develop a sense of empathy and an understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely impact. A striking display clearly exemplifies this by showing the strong links which have been established with a school in South Africa. These and other activities enrich the pupils' experience and promote their understanding of the need for tolerance and harmony amongst people with different cultural traditions.

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

4.6 Welfare, health and safety are good overall. The school continues to meet its commitment to provide excellent levels of pastoral care and is successful in ensuring the welfare, health and safety of its pupils, thus achieving its aim to produce a supportive and caring environment in which every pupil can feel secure, valued and capable of achieving success. Arrangements for promoting the well-being of children in the EYFS are effective, ensuring they are well protected and their needs are met.

4.7 The effective pastoral care arrangements are well established. Tutors and form teachers are responsible for the welfare of the pupils and keep pastoral records to ensure that they retain a clear overview of 'the whole child'. They provide high quality support for pupils in a friendly and relaxed manner, within a family environment. A clear programme of PSHE topics is effectively covered in tutor periods. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is a great strength. Staff are totally committed to pupil care, giving solid support when it is needed and demonstrating a genuine concern for the individual pupil. Pupils spoken to thought that the school was friendly and that any problems would be sorted out by the headmaster or their teachers.

4.8 A consistent and positive approach to the management of behaviour, together with high expectations, means that the pupils work in a well-ordered learning environment. The school has a well formulated anti-bullying policy and the school's arrangements for promoting good behaviour are thorough. The 'Parkside family tree' displayed in classrooms gives pupils a clear indication of who they might turn to if they are worried or concerned. In addition, pupils are encouraged to post any concerns anonymously in the 'purple box' which are subsequently dealt with personally by the headmaster. Nevertheless, a few of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that some teachers did not listen sufficiently to them or respond to their views. Pupils respond positively to the range of rewards, such as 'good marks' awarded for outstanding work or exemplary behaviour and the 'Pusdog badge' awarded to pupils who epitomise the 'Pusdog code'. The headmaster's commendation is highly prized. The sanctions within the school are understood by the pupils and overall used effectively by the staff.

- 4.9 Successful arrangements and procedures are effectively implemented to safeguard and promote the pupils' welfare, health and well-being. Safeguarding of pupils is a priority for the school and all staff have received up-to-date and relevant training in child protection. The revised safeguarding policy is comprehensive and contains all the necessary elements, though its implementation has not been complete in the detail of staff appointments and the recording of them. Risk assessments are completed for all relevant areas of school life, including educational visits. Fire precautions receive due attention and fire practices are held regularly. All necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are in place. The checks of fire and electrical appliances, plus records of evacuation procedures, are all up to date and the school undertakes a thorough assessment of risk from fire.
- 4.10 School food is healthy and pupils feel the quality is good, although some would appreciate a broader range of choices at lunchtime. The importance of choosing a healthy diet is covered appropriately in science lessons. Numerous opportunities for physical exercise are promoted through the extensive sports programme, thus fulfilling the school's aim to encourage all pupils to be aware of the importance of physical health and to participate in some branch of sport. Routines for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents are thorough and the majority of staff are trained in first aid as the result of a comprehensive training programme. Adequate provision is made for pupils who are unwell during the day. The school's access plan has appropriate timescales for improving accessibility for those with learning or physical problems. Admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is good. The school is well led by a board of governors who are extremely supportive, well informed, and play an important part in monitoring the school's work and planning for the future. They are in most respects effective in overseeing welfare, health and safety and they maintain a high quality of resources and staffing. They are highly successful in meeting their principle aim to prepare pupils for life.
- 5.2 Governors monitor the school effectively and have a clear picture of its qualities. The board's responsibilities are well defined with clear management arrangements and an efficient and effective structure of committees. Oversight of the school's financial affairs is managed effectively through the bursar. Astute planning has ensured a well-planned programme of improvement to facilities, good staffing levels and resources to meet pupils' educational needs. Governors are kept informed about educational progress and initiatives through working closely with the school to devise, implement and monitor development plans. The governing body is fully involved in the process of school evaluation and governors bring a wide range of skills to bear on this. Their analysis and support enables the school to promote community cohesion exceptionally well within the school and local community.
- 5.3 Good relations between the governors and staff are strongly fostered. In addition to attending formal regular meetings, governors are conscientious about visiting the school at other times. Subject presentations from staff, observing lessons, talking to staff, parents and pupils, and attendance at a variety of school functions helps keep governors well informed and allows them to support staff by providing good advice and appropriate levels of challenge.
- 5.4 The governing body show a keen awareness of their responsibilities and are committed to the welfare of the pupils throughout the school. Governors promote and undertake regular training in these areas, ensure provision is reviewed annually and that school documentation is updated as required. However, the governing body has not ensured that correct procedures are consistently followed in the making and recording of staff appointments.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good. The school, including the EYFS, benefits considerably from strong and experienced leadership at all levels which is effective in the fulfilment of the school aims and aspirations.
- 5.6 A clear and decisive sense of direction has ensured that much progress has been made since the previous inspection. This is particularly reflected in the achievements of the pupils, the high quality pastoral care and the excellent links with parents. An improved framework for leadership and management has been established. The programme for PSHE and citizenship has been greatly improved and ICT is more fully integrated throughout the curriculum. Excellent opportunities are provided for areas such as music, art and design and physical education. The school's strong sense of community, excellent ethos and very happy, confident pupils are testament to the dedicated leadership and management.

- 5.7 The school has a strong ethos of mutual support. Regular meetings enable those with management responsibilities to analyse the school's needs, set priorities and establish strategies for implementation. The school's objectives for improvement are derived from widespread and perceptive self-evaluation. Whilst this has resulted in a comprehensive school plan that sets out an appropriate agenda for the improvement of the school, the arrangements identified for evaluating success are not always sufficiently sharply focused. Heads of department are taking effective action to build a thorough oversight of their responsibilities, although inconsistency exists in their monitoring and evaluation roles. Academic policies and subject handbooks have been prepared for all subjects and planning at this level is of a particularly good quality. Assessment systems have been strengthened so that the school is better placed to analyse the achievement of different groups, but further work is required in this area.
- 5.8 Throughout the school qualified, experienced and highly committed staff are encouraged to update their skills regularly. The recruitment of well-qualified staff is successfully managed; staffing levels are good, enabling strong support to be given to pupils. All members of staff are well trained in procedures to safeguard the pupils' well-being, safety and health. Swift action has been taken to rectify errors in procedures for making and recording staff appointments since the time of the initial inspection. The central register of appointments has been thoroughly revised and procedures tightened, so that the arrangements now meet requirements. Many in-service training opportunities are available for staff, and the appraisal programme is used appropriately to identify training needs and professional development opportunities.

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

- 5.9 The school has forged excellent links with parents in accordance with its aim to build close relationships between school, parent and the home. Since the previous inspection, the school's links with its parents have been successfully built upon.
- 5.10 Parents, including those with children in the EYFS, are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire they expressed overwhelming approval for the breadth of the curriculum, the quality of teaching, pastoral care and the attitudes and values the school promotes. A small number of concerns were raised. These included the way the school handled concerns, the amount of homework and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. Inspectors found there to be sufficient opportunities offered to parents for the purpose of discussion, that nearly all pupils with learning difficulties achieve standards above expectations and that, overall, homework was appropriate to the ages and abilities of the children.
- 5.11 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in activities in the school. They are encouraged to support their children at school events, concerts and matches. They help with educational visits and school productions, assist with the library and extra-curricular activities. The active Friends of Parkside Association (FOP) raises considerable sums of money for charity and to benefit the pupils with the provision of extra resources. In addition, they are instrumental in welcoming new parents to the school through a variety of social events. Class representatives meet together regularly, as well as with the headmaster, to discuss ideas and suggestions put forward by other parents.

- 5.12 The school keeps parents well informed, and they receive good quality information about the school. The prospectus, together with various other publications, gives a colourful and informative picture of all aspects of school life. A wide range of policies, procedures and helpful information is openly posted on the recently upgraded school website for the parents of both current and prospective pupils. The increasing use of electronic methods of communication has provided an efficient means of contacting parents, which they very much appreciate. Homework diaries are not only used effectively for recording homework but as a useful means of liaison between home and school. Parents receive regular well-considered reports and are kept informed about the detail of their children's progress through consultation evenings and informal discussion with the staff. The strong partnership between home and the school spreads to pastoral and disciplinary issues where parents are always contacted to help resolve any matter causing concern
- 5.13 The school has an effective procedure for dealing with parental complaints both on an informal and formal basis. Parental concerns are handled sensitively and with appropriate care. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns which often results in issues being resolved well before they become problems. Parents feel that their concerns are listened to and, where necessary, acted upon.

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 the EYFS is good. The common sense of purpose and practice between staff ensures that children make good progress in their learning and that their needs are met. The children's well-being is central to practice, and each child is treated as an individual. Managers and staff are committed to continually improving provision. Recommendations made at previous inspections have been addressed, and a greater range of stimulating, practical activities for EYFS children in the pre-prep classes has been introduced.

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

6.2 The leadership and management of the EYFS are good. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure that children are safe and staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They attend child protection and paediatric first aid training, and carry out and implement thorough risk assessments. They are well deployed to provide children with high levels of support and to make good use of the wide range of resources and facilities, both in and outdoors. There are good policies and procedures in place for combating discrimination, and for identifying and providing additional support as early as possible so that no child is disadvantaged. Excellent liaison ensures the transfer of children between the early years classes is very well managed. This smooth transition was appreciated by parents who expressed a high level satisfaction with all aspects of the early years provision. Although the nursery and reception classes are located in different parts of the school, staff work well together to ensure a consistent approach to practice and to tracking the children's progress. However, processes for reviewing and evaluating practice across the EYFS as a whole are not yet sufficiently systematic to drive improvement.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is good. Children are provided with a broad range of experiences in bright and stimulating environments which are organised to encourage curiosity and independence. Activities are planned to encourage exploration, problem solving and co-operation, and are regularly reviewed and adapted in light of children's needs and interests. Staff form excellent relationships with children, and engender an enthusiasm for learning through the good use of praise and questioning. Regular observations and assessments of children are made, and targets are set to ensure they make good progress in their learning. All aspects of the children's welfare are promoted very well through the effective implementation of a comprehensive range of policies and procedures.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are good. Children are eager and enthusiastic learners. They quickly develop confidence, and learn to take responsibility for small tasks and to cooperate with one another. They are keen to express themselves, speaking confidently and listening attentively to others. Their early reading, writing and mathematical skills develop well. Children's growing creativity and knowledge of the world is reflected through their artwork and the many good opportunities for role play. They develop good health and hygiene practices, and their awareness of the need to keep themselves and others safe is apparent through their play and their very good behaviour.

Complaints since the previous inspection

- 6.5 Since the previous inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, 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 Gail Purt	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Linda Swain	Head of department (IAPS school)
Mr David Goulbourn	Head (SHMIS school)
Mr Ian Raybould	Head (IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Culliford	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Clare Harris	Early Years Team Inspector (Montessori nursery)