



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CRESCENT SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Crescent School

Full Name of School	Crescent School
DfE Number	937/6041
Registered Charity Number	1120628
Address	Crescent School Bawnmore Road Bilton Rugby Warwickshire CV22 7QH
Telephone Number	01788 521595
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Email Address	admin@crescentschool.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr R Huw Marshall
Chair of Governors	Mr Nigel Lines
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	160
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (92 boys; 68 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 47 5-11: 113
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	24 May 2011 to 25 May 2011 22 Jun 2011 to 24 Jun 2011

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 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 of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Crescent School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the ages of three to eleven. It was founded in 1948 as a school for the children of the masters at Rugby School and was originally housed there. When it outgrew its premises in 1988, a purpose-built school was purchased in Bilton, a leafy residential suburb approximately two miles south of Rugby town centre. It still retains informal links with its founding school. The school is run as a charitable trust within a Christian environment and is administered by a board of governors. The headmaster was appointed in 2002.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 160 pupils on roll, of whom 47 were aged 3 to 5 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); of these 23 attended part-time. Approximately three-sevenths of the pupils are girls. Most pupils come from professional or business families within a relatively wide variety of social backgrounds and live in Rugby or the surrounding villages. Approximately one out of every eight pupils comes from various ethnic minority groups and no pupil has English as an additional language. Eleven pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), but none has a statement of special educational needs. The results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school overall is above the national average.
- 1.3 The school aims to enable pupils to develop into confident and independent young people through being in a happy environment based on Christian values which engenders wide-ranging successes, so they are well prepared for their secondary education. It strives to nurture pupils as individuals so that they learn about themselves by developing their own talents and interests, the world around them and their places in it. The school seeks to encourage them to strive for excellence in all that they do, by providing a broad curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular activities as well as giving them opportunities to have a lot of fun.
- 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	Nursery
Reception	Reception

Preparatory School

School	NC name
Class I	Year 1
Class II	Year 2
Class III	Year 3
Class IV	Year 4
Class V	Year 5
Class VI	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Crescent School largely fulfils its aims and successfully prepares pupils for the next stage of their schooling. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning; their knowledge, understanding and skills are developed effectively across a broad curriculum. Their excellent attitudes and exemplary behaviour, together with very positive relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff, make a strong contribution to their achievements. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is comprehensive and reflects the school's aims and ethos. The breadth of extra-curricular activities is sound, but does not cover a wide enough range of interests beyond sport and music. Teaching is good; teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and make effective use of a range of resources including information and communication technology (ICT). On occasion, over-directed teaching, a slower pace to lessons, the use of many worksheets and a variability in marking limits the challenge available, particularly for more able pupils. Those with LDD are generally supported well in lessons or given appropriate tasks and, together with those who have support from a specialist teacher, make good progress.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent and is supported by outstanding pastoral care and good arrangements for welfare, health and safety. Pupils are self-confident and have a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They are extremely tolerant and respectful of each other's differences and collaborate very well with each other in their work. They contribute to their school community in a positive way through the school council, and their connections with a village project in Malawi give them a stronger understanding of life beyond their own experience. The pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves manifests itself in their generous approach to charitable giving. Pupils are safeguarded very well on a day-to-day basis; staff are appropriately trained and health and safety is given a high priority. However, some recruitment procedures lacked rigour in the past.
- 2.3 The aims and ethos of the school are fostered well by the governing body, which is committed to the personal development and academic achievement of each pupil. The governors have an effective oversight of the school and participate in the monitoring of the quality of the educational experience offered. Leadership and management are good overall, with robust policies and procedures. Since the previous inspection, all recommendations have been implemented, including a focus on assessment procedures. The monitoring of teaching and learning lacks sufficient rigour, and the school development plan is not sharply focused on key priorities. Links with parents are promoted well. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were particularly positive about the curriculum, the availability of information and timely responses to their questions, the standard of behaviour and the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values. A significant minority raised issues about their concerns not being handled with due care and the information they receive about their child's progress, and inspectors agree with their views. A number of parents were concerned about the provision for those with LDD and the more able, and the opportunity to be involved with the school's life and work. Inspection evidence did 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 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- ensure that all recruitment checks are carried out on staff before their appointment [Part 4, paragraphs 19(2)(a), 19(3) and 22(3)(b), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings as far as it was possible to do so, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Undertake the monitoring of teaching and learning more rigorously so that it has an impact on the achievement of more able pupils and reduces the variability in marking.
 2. Revise the school development plan so it is sharper and more focused on key priorities over the next three years.
 3. Consider ways of extending the choice of extra-curricular activities to include more diverse hobbies and interests.
 4. Ensure that the school deals with any parental concerns more sensitively.
 5. Plan more frequent and stimulating opportunities for outside exploration and investigation by children in the EYFS Reception class.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements, and their learning, attitudes and skills are good. The standard of their academic work broadly fulfils the school's aims of enabling pupils to develop into confident and independent young people who achieve wide-ranging successes so they are well-prepared for their secondary education, and encouraging them to strive for excellence in all that they do. Pupils are articulate and express themselves well, both orally and in writing. Their numeracy skills are good and are applied in other subjects effectively. In response to a recommendation at the time of the previous inspection, pupils are developing good ICT skills and applying them in a range of curriculum areas. Their creativity is strong, as seen in the vibrant art and design and technology (DT) displays around the school. On frequent occasions, pupils are given good opportunities to think for themselves, interact well in lessons and discuss ideas with their peers, but these independent learning chances do not occur consistently enough for more able pupils to develop their viewpoints and opinions at their own level of ability. In a few lessons when the pace slows down, the volume of work covered by pupils is insufficient.
- 3.2 Pupils use resources well in lessons to support their learning. All pupils with LDD throughout the school receive extra support in class from the class teacher or an assistant, and this generally enables them to approach the tasks they are given with some confidence and enjoyment so that they also achieve well relative to their ability. For example, in one mathematics lesson, pupils were rolling a die and adding on the resultant digits as fast as possible, improving their mental strategies. In another, more able pupils were applying their knowledge of co-ordinates to translations with great speed and accuracy, demonstrating that they too were making good progress when given challenging tasks at their own level of ability. Pupils achieve well in other pursuits, including instrumental music, ballet and speech and drama examinations, where most gain a distinction or merit. Football, netball, swimming and athletics teams are particularly successful in competitions locally.
- 3.3 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. The pupils follow a wide curriculum and, on leaving the school, approximately half of the Year 6 pupils gain places at local maintained selective schools. Most of the others continue their senior schooling at local independent schools, both day and boarding, with many winning scholarships, either academic, music or all-rounder awards. Inspection evidence confirms this judgement on attainment and includes consideration of the levels at which pupils are working in relation to national targets as seen in test results. This level of attainment, as judged from lesson observations, the pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.4 Pupils' good achievement overall is supported by their excellent attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour and the extremely good relationships they enjoy between themselves and with staff. The presentation of their work is often good. They are well-motivated, demonstrate effective concentration and are eager to learn. They say that they enjoy their learning and this is particularly apparent when they collaborate very effectively with each other, for example during science experiments.

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

- 3.5 Pupils enjoy a good curriculum which is wide-ranging and well planned, supporting the school's aims and making a strong contribution to pupils' achievement. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning, and also includes Spanish, French, Latin, religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Cross-curricular work is a positive feature of the education provided. Staff are deployed to best advantage in that they are either specialist teachers or they teach a subject in which they have some expertise across several year groups. Whilst the use of ICT across the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, it is taught discretely alongside DT on a half-termly basis, and therefore pupils do not have continuous opportunity to develop their skills. The PSHE programme is comprehensive and reflects the aims and ethos of the school, covering important elements such as sex and relationships education, drugs awareness and substance abuse, and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils take part in regular drama productions throughout the school year. Subject planning is of a high quality, with most documents indicating the opportunities that will be taken for assessment and how the pupils' individual needs will be met. Pupils are prepared effectively for the next stage of their education.
- 3.6 The provision for those pupils with LDD is effective. Some pupils in Years 3 to 6 have high quality individual lessons with a specialist teacher who produces individual education plans to support their learning, as well as being effectively supported in the classroom. Focused targets are set, monitored and regularly reviewed. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are supported effectively during lessons by their teacher and by teaching assistants; thus all these pupils are enabled to achieve well in relation to their abilities. Provision for those who are more able is generally good, with certain activities, such as the writers' guild, specifically designed to challenge them at their own level. Challenge within the classroom is not always as strongly evident.
- 3.7 A sound range of extra-curricular activities is available. These are strongly based around sport, ballet and music, with few clubs offered which take account of pupils' other hobbies and interests. Those that are available, such as art, Spanish, times tables challenge and writers' guild, are arranged so that there is little choice at the times when they are running. Enrichment activities, such as trips to places of historical and cultural interest and visitors into school on various subjects, effectively enhance the pupils' knowledge and understanding across many curriculum areas. Photographs, posters and displays around the school give evidence of the important part these experiences play in the pupils' education. Links with the community are well developed through the sports department which organises matches with local independent and maintained schools. The school choir sings at local residential homes for the elderly, and pupils raise money for local, national and international charities. These activities make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development by enabling them to respect each other's talents and develop team work.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.8 The quality of teaching is good and makes a significant contribution to the achievements of the pupils. It is in line with the aim of the school of encouraging pupils to strive for excellence in all that they do. Teachers have a strong knowledge of their subjects. In the best lessons, the enthusiasm shown by staff fosters the interest of the pupils and encourages them to ask pertinent questions, which pupils are happy to do, comfortable in the knowledge that teachers will listen to them and value their ideas and opinions. Interactions in these lessons, such as the use of talk partners, foster good opportunities for pupils to engage with each other's ideas, think solutions through for themselves and reason effectively. In a few lessons, over-directed teaching limited scope for pupils to learn independently. A variety of teaching methods and activities are employed frequently in lessons to help maintain pupil interest as well as aid their progress. Excellent behaviour is encouraged. A good quality and quantity of resources are well used, including interactive whiteboards, although a large number of worksheets were seen in the pupils' books which restricted the expression of their own ideas and the writing of independent number sentences. The library is used as a suitable resource to support teaching and learning.
- 3.9 Teachers know their pupils very well; they are generally sensitive to their needs and sometimes plan carefully according to the abilities of individuals, by either giving support to those who need extra help with their learning, or by giving an appropriate task, although the latter was seen less often. Extension work is sometimes provided for those who are more able, but this is not often identified as an alternative simultaneous task to other class work. On the occasions when the initial task is not challenging, the pace of learning is not fast enough for more able pupils and they are unable to reach their full potential. _
- 3.10 Assessment is good and has received a great deal of focus since the previous inspection. Key objectives are used in many curriculum areas to monitor how pupils are progressing in their knowledge, understanding and skills in individual subjects. Standardised tests in verbal reasoning, English and mathematics, and annual spelling and reading tests, are carried out and analysed. Some monitoring of individual pupils' progress is done using National Curriculum levels of attainment. All work is marked regularly and encouraging comments abound. Individual targets for pupils are not yet routinely set in subjects such as English and mathematics so that pupils can take some responsibility for, and contribute towards, their own learning. The best marking informs pupils of what is good in their work and what they need to do to improve further. Pupils say they find staff comments for improvement very helpful and inspectors agree, but such comments are not given consistently across all subjects.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent and is promoted by outstanding relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are confident and caring and these characteristics are appreciated by the staff throughout the school. They are friendly, polite and courteous, which demonstrates that the school fulfils its aim of developing confident and independent young people through being in a happy environment based on Christian values.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual awareness is well developed. Pupils are self-confident and self-aware and have a good understanding of themselves and their place in the world around them. They enjoy and benefit from the residential trip to the outdoor centre at Slapton when they identify and reflect upon the wonders of nature and the environment. They develop a strong understanding of the importance of expressing feelings and emotions through subjects like PSHE, art and music. They reflect well on spiritual issues in assemblies and special services held at important times in the school's calendar. They have a good knowledge of other world faiths through RE lessons and they visit various places of worship.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral code is extremely strong. A sense of right and wrong is very much in evidence as is their understanding of making the right choices, and this is actively encouraged by staff. The pupils are heavily involved in charity work, much of which revolves around the local hospice. Pupils have respect for the property of others and show self-discipline. They have a concern for the environment and know what they can do to help recycle and save energy. They understand all about the networks of people whom they can trust and who can keep them safe, including the issues of cyber safety.
- 4.4 The social awareness of the pupils is outstanding. All pupils understand the role of the prefects in Year 6 and have a clear understanding of how to achieve this responsibility. In other years, form duties are carried out conscientiously such as the ringing of the bell or taking around the register. The school council plays a major part in the school community and allows the pupils an opportunity to express opinions which are listened to and valued. Pupils co-operate very well in lessons and strongly support each other on the games field. Pupils gain a good knowledge of the public services and institutions in England through their PSHE lessons which include visiting or having visitors from the local services such as the fire service and the police. They understand how democracy works and older pupils have benefited from a visit by the local MP.
- 4.5 Pupils have an excellent understanding of their own culture and the culture of others through their studies in music, art and languages, in addition to the various trips that are undertaken to museums, art exhibitions and theatres. They discover how different and diverse the world is while working on their geographical and charitable project in Bwengu, a village in Malawi. These opportunities help to promote the pupils' understanding and tolerance of the various cultures and faiths that exist in Britain today.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good, fulfilling the aim of the school to nurture pupils as individuals so they learn about themselves, the world around them and their places in it. The pastoral care shown to pupils is excellent and makes a very strong contribution to their personal development. The staff promote the care and welfare of pupils as a high priority within the school, and many aspects, such as the handing over of pupils to parents at the end of the day, are meticulously carried out. Weekly staff meetings and the daily staff room noticeboard alert all staff to any pupils who may be facing difficulties at home or at school.
- 4.7 Relationships between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils themselves are extremely positive. A minority of the pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that staff did not treat pupils equally, but this view was not borne out in any of the different discussions with pupils during the inspection. Pupils say that they are very well cared for, and that they have an adult to turn to should they have a problem. Behaviour around the school is very good and is supported by strong policies with suitable rewards and sanctions; an important part of the week is privilege time on Friday afternoons, when pupils have a choice of classroom activities as a reward for high standards of behaviour. The pupils believe that bullying is rare and agree that staff deal with any issues quickly and constructively, bearing in mind any related difficulty. The inspection confirmed all of the pupils' positive views. Older pupils show a good awareness of the needs of younger pupils, for example by helping at lunchtime. The safeguarding of pupils is effective overall; all staff are trained in line with their responsibilities and a detailed policy ensures that day-to-day practice is strong, although the policy has not always been implemented fully in the past concerning recruitment processes. Welfare, health and safety procedures are therefore good.
- 4.8 High priority is given to promoting health and safety and all policies in this area are reviewed on a regular basis, with the strong involvement of governors. Measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, with risk assessments prepared which cover buildings, subject areas and lessons, and educational visits. The arrangements for pupils who fall ill during the school day are appropriate. An accessibility plan has been written which is designed to improve the premises and educational provision for those pupils with disabilities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise, with nutritious meals provided for lunch which offer a good choice of hot food or salads. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained and kept.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Good governance enables the aims of the school to be largely met, particularly in providing a happy environment based on Christian values. Governors bring a range of individual expertise to the board and, through the work of the sub-committees, maintain a good understanding of, and support and challenge for, the school's development. Some of the governors work closely with the headmaster and visit the school regularly, observing lessons within the termly monitoring cycle arranged by senior staff. Some have direct contact with, or take responsibility for, an aspect of the school; for example, one governor takes responsibility for liaising closely with the EYFS and attends the setting one morning each week. Other ways in which governors find out about the school are through the termly reports of the headmaster and bursar and by attending school events. In addition, they invite staff to make presentations on their responsibility area at the governors' meetings.
- 5.2 Governors have clear strategic and financial control, budgeting carefully for the school's development and ensuring good levels of staffing, accommodation and resources. Minutes of meetings indicate that they discuss all aspects of school life vigorously and several governors have undertaken training. They have produced a well written induction policy for new governors. A termly check of health and safety is carried out by a group of governors who walk the buildings and grounds during each holiday fulfilling their responsibility in that area. They also annually review the child protection policy and the way in which its duties have been discharged, although oversight has not been rigorous on a few occasions in the past when recruiting staff. They endeavour to keep abreast of regulations but the process for monitoring compliance is not systematic or formalised.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Leadership and management are good overall, in line with the school's aims of enabling pupils to achieve wide-ranging successes, so they are well prepared for their secondary education. Since the previous inspection, the roles of senior and middle managers have been more clearly defined and have included monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, responding to a recommendation from that time, the school has set up a process whereby aspects of the educational experience can be reviewed on a regular basis; for example, each subject is reviewed in depth once every three years. Senior leadership has complementary skills and works effectively together, along with other senior managers, to provide a clear vision and direction, setting day-to-day priorities that ensure the good quality of the educational experience and excellent personal development of pupils. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are committed to ensuring that pupils are very well cared for and that they achieve both academically and personally as well as they can. This vision is embedded in the school's development plan but this has too many ambitious targets for the current year for the staff to be able to realistically support its fulfilment, and it contains no success criteria which define when these targets will have been successfully fulfilled. The plan is not currently linked sufficiently well to the subject review process.

- 5.4 Middle managers are effective, having produced good departmental schemes of work and policies. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is carried out regularly through lesson observation by governors and senior leaders, and through peer review, linking well with the subject review timetable. It has not been carried out sufficiently rigorously to identify, and have an impact on, the amount of challenge given to more able pupils in some lessons. Examination of the pupils' work is also undertaken regularly as is the checking of the quality of planning. A suitable appraisal system is used which makes some use of the information gained from lesson observation to inform the targets for future professional development.
- 5.5 Staff are well qualified and deployed effectively, and, together with ancillary and support staff, make a good contribution to the pupils' personal development and achievements. In-service training is valued and staff attend external as well as in-house courses. Policies and procedures relating to all aspects of school life are regularly discussed and reviewed, particularly those which have a strong impact on the excellent personal development and pastoral care of the pupils. The needs of the pupils are of paramount importance, and all staff are suitably trained in areas of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. All staff have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau, but recruitment procedures in the past have not always been undertaken rigorously enough before staff have been appointed. However, all checks have been rectified, as far as it is possible to do so, since the initial visit of the inspection, a central register is accurately maintained and the most recent staff have been recruited meticulously. The school uses its good accommodation to best advantage. The high quality and bright displays of the pupils' work celebrate their hard work and achievements.

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

- 5.6 The school promotes an effective relationship with the parents, in accordance with its aims, which makes a strong contribution to the pupils developing into confident and independent young people. The results of the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that the majority of parents who responded are positive about many aspects of the educational experience provided for their children and the overall communication from the school. In particular, they appreciate the breadth of the curriculum, the high standards of behaviour achieved by the school, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values, that information and policies are readily available and that they receive timely responses to their questions. Inspectors agree with these views. A significant minority of parents raised issues about the way in which their concerns were handled and the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspection evidence supported these concerns. Parents also stated that they do not feel encouraged to be involved in the school's life and work, and they have concerns regarding the help given to those pupils with LDD and the more able. Through careful investigation and after further discussion with parents, pupils and staff, the inspectors believe that, in general terms, these two concerns are unjustified.
- 5.7 All relevant information about the school is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the website. Parents receive weekly newsletters, have access to a detailed handbook and a good annual booklet, *Crescent Circular*, highlights events, news and successes of the pupils. The website has been completely updated since the previous inspection and provides a great deal of information and policies. Parents have numerous opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school and are welcomed on many occasions. They volunteer to hear readers, drive to matches and even tend the flower-beds. They are encouraged to attend

special assemblies. The school has organised evenings for parent to be aware of subjects such as PSHE. The friends' association is very active in providing events for parents and their children and their support is much appreciated by the school.

- 5.8 Parents receive appropriate information about their children's progress with full reports once, and short reports and consultations twice each year. Full reports give good detail about the individual progress a pupil is making in their understanding, knowledge and skills across the full range of subjects, and the best provide targets about how they can improve still further. However, short reports are not pupil-specific in the comments given, except in a personal development section written by the class teacher. A timely response to concerns when they arise is appreciated by parents. However, a few issues have not been handled sensitively and with due care in the past. Evidence indicates that a recently updated complaints policy is now rigorous in its procedures.

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 setting is good. Teachers provide tasks that are carefully tailored to children's individual needs, promoting confidence and an eagerness to learn, so that children make good progress and their needs are well met. The caring environment ensures a warm, family atmosphere where all children have a secure start to their education. There has been good improvement in the use of the outside area by children in the Nursery class since the last Ofsted inspection of the Nursery provision, giving them more opportunity to develop their play.

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

6.2 The quality of leadership and management is good. There is clear determination to improve the quality of the provision, shown through effective self-evaluation which identifies areas for improvement. For example, strategies are being put in place to improve creative writing. Records, policies and procedures support effective management, and those which are designed to ensure safeguarding, children's welfare and equality are outstanding on a day-to-day basis, although in the past there have been shortcomings in the checking of new staff. There are strong partnerships with parents who are welcomed into school and who are very supportive, as shown in highly positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Visitors such as doctors and vets give children fascinating insights into the wider world. Staff take every opportunity to receive training both internally and with other providers. The learning environment is good and resources both indoors and outside are plentiful and of good quality.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is good. Teaching is effective. Children in Reception were mesmerised as they listened to their teacher use a rain-maker instrument to outstanding effect. Sometimes, introductions to lessons are too long. Regular assessment ensures that staff have thorough knowledge of each child's stage of development, and this is used well to plan activities which focus on individual children's needs leading to good progress. The curriculum is broad and a sensible balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The current planning of the timetable limits the opportunities for children in the Reception class to develop their learning outside. The calm, orderly routines which include excellent levels of attention to children's safety and welfare in both Nursery and Reception create an atmosphere in which children concentrate well, feel confident and thrive. For example, children in Reception are taught about the effects and benefit of exercise on their bodies, and there is a constant focus on moving around school in an orderly way.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes are good. Children are enthusiastic, make good gains in their knowledge and are well prepared for the next step in their education. They enjoy practising their reading skills, their free writing is developing well and all children can write a simple sentence using their phonic knowledge. They listen attentively. Children count carefully and take numbers away from ten accurately. Their ICT skills are sound. By the end of the EYFS, many children achieve the Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning and some children exceed them. Their social and communication skills are good, but investigative and exploratory skills are less well developed in outside play by Reception children. Children understand clearly about being safe and the importance of healthy eating, and those in the Nursery are eager to explain why they wash their hands. All children make happy friendships with staff and each other and their behaviour is often excellent.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair and almost the full board 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 Elizabeth Coley

Mr Pete Brooks

Mrs Jenny Clayphan

Reporting Inspector

Headmaster, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector