



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KING EDWARD VII AND QUEEN MARY SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

FINAL VISIT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

King Edward VII and Queen Mary school

Full Name of school	King Edward VII and Queen Mary school
DCSF Number	888/6014
EYFS Number	EY308691
Registered Charity Number	526315
Address	King Edward VII and Queen Mary School Clifton Drive South Lytham St Annes Lancashire FY8 1DT
Telephone Number	01253 784100
Fax Number	01253 784150
Email Address	Principal@keqms.co.uk
Principal	Mr R J Karling
Chairman of Governors	The Reverend Canon Godfrey Hirst
Age Range	1 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	627
Gender of Pupils	Mixed
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 22 5-11: 109 3-5 (EYFS): 41 11-18: 455
Number of Day Pupils	627
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection date/EYFS	25th to 26th January 2010
Final (team) visit	22nd to 24th February 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 April, 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	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommended action	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	5
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	9
(a) The quality of governance	9
(b) The quality of leadership and management	9
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	11
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King Edward VII and Queen Mary School is on an extensive site only a few hundred yards from the sea near Lytham St Annes. The school is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of one and nineteen. It developed from the merger in 1999 of two single-sex schools run by the same Foundation. The Lytham Schools Foundation, which owns the school, is a charity established in the late 18th Century and provides this school in Lytham along with supporting two primary schools. The governing body includes representatives of the trust managers of the foundation and of the universities of Lancaster, Manchester and Liverpool, together with co-opted members. The school offers provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in its Kindergarten and pre-school on a site very close to the main school, with 41 pupils aged three to five, and 22 pupils under the age of three.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the former Nursery and infant school and the former junior school have been combined into one preparatory school (prep) with a headmaster reporting to the principal, and the senior management structure of the senior school has been streamlined. The governing body has reformed its committee structures and their terms of reference.
- 1.3 The school lists to parents its aims as: aiming to provide the best possible academic education and to inspire each boy and girl to achieve his or her personal potential in and out of the classroom; having the responsibility, with parents, to contribute to each pupil's growth in terms of physical health, personal and emotional maturity, creative and aesthetic awareness and moral and spiritual development; aiming to praise, be supportive and to understand each individual boy and girl, whilst insisting that all set themselves the highest standards in work, in personal appearance and organisation and in courtesy and concern for others; paying particular attention to the quality of personal relationships and to a sense of community in which all pupils and members of staff are valued for their individual contribution.
- 1.4 The school has 589 full-time pupils (332 boys and 257 girls) and 38 part-time pupils under the age of five. Of the full-time pupils, 347 are in the senior school aged eleven to sixteen, and 108 are in the sixth form. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. The majority of pupils come from professional or trading families from the immediate school area and parts of the Fylde as far as Preston. Very few pupils are from ethnic minorities. One pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). Two have statements of special educational need (SEN) issued by a local authority and the school itself has identified 95 as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards, the school is well on the way to meeting its high aims. The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills are good. The pupils progress well in relation to their above average ability and achieve good examination results in national tests at the age of eleven, and at GCSE and A level. Pupils also earn local and national honours in sport and cultural matters. However, the teachers' marking is of variable quality and occasionally teaching does not provide sufficient challenge. Pupils are effective learners, and they are very well-behaved well-mannered and responsive to the cheerful good discipline of the school.
- 2.2 The pupils develop well, especially in moral, social and cultural areas. In their daily school life they are happy, secure and not afraid of hard work. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and think of others, as shown in their behaviour and good manners within the school and their concern for others in the wider communities where they raise large sums for charities. The school itself has identified a need, seen by the inspectors, to develop the pupils' spirituality. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils constitute a strength of the school. Pupils collaborate very well with each other in the classroom and outside. The staff through the good arrangements for pastoral care look after the pupils very effectively and provide a safe environment. The pupils have a sense of belonging and know they are cared for very well.
- 2.3 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management contributes to the success of the school. The governors have very good oversight of the school, informed by reports from senior managers and by their own frequent visits. The school leadership works well with the governors to produce an effective school. The school leadership and management responded well to the recommendations in the report of the previous inspection and the instances of bad behaviour noted then have been eliminated in a school which is now very well disciplined. However, though progress has been made in the monitoring of teachers' work, more needs to be done so that the standards of all are up to the standards of the best. Those parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires, were very largely positive in their judgements about the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent school Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- within the final term of the EYFS provide the parent of a child, in relation to whom the EYFS Profile has been completed, with a written summary reporting the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and the assessment scales.

2.6 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 In addition to rectifying the weakness in meeting regulatory requirements the school is advised to make the following improvements:

1. the senior leadership team should ensure that middle management is effectively monitoring teaching on such matters as marking of work and providing suitable challenge for all pupils;
2. develop more fully the spiritual potentialities of the pupils;
3. in the EYFS, improve the use of outdoor space for continuous provision across all areas learning; and,
4. in the EYFS, further develop the monitoring of teaching and learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Standards at the school are high. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are well educated and their good achievement in academic work and extra-curricular activities largely fulfils the school's aims of providing the best possible education and inspiring each boy and girl to achieve his or her own personal potential. Results in national tests at the age of eleven over the last three years for which comparative data are available have been high overall in comparison with the national average for all maintained primary schools. Results in GCSE and A-level examinations over the last three years for which national comparative data are available have been high when compared with the national average for pupils in all maintained schools. Pupils are successful in such areas as sport, music, drama, debating and speech examinations. At regional level they have excelled in team games, debating and Young Enterprise. Pupils have played in county youth orchestras, sung in the National Youth Choir, and played rugby at national level.
- 3.2 Pupils make good progress in their learning over time. They develop their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. Pupils also develop well in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils are taught, in the early years of the senior school, a system of fingering for the computer which means that they do not need to look at the keyboard and so they are generally fluent, quick and accurate. In the earliest years of the prep school, pupils quickly build a very firm foundation in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. At all levels, pupils apply their mastery of literacy and numeracy effectively to their work across the curriculum. Their creativity is strong, as seen in the impressive artwork displayed around the school and in music and drama. Pupils are articulate and they express themselves with confidence, not only orally but also in writing. In the senior school, the presentation of their work is of high quality, demonstrating the concentration and effort they put into it but this is less true in the prep school especially with pupils' handwriting and their attention to detail. From an early age, pupils reason well and can think for themselves although the opportunities to develop these skills further is sometimes limited by teaching which restricts independent reflection. They collaborate effectively with each other, frequently offering support and advice.
- 3.3 The pupils' successful achievement is supported by their good attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour, both in and out of class, and the excellent relationships they enjoy with staff. The leadership of the school has responded well to the recommendations of the previous report in improving the approach of a small number of recalcitrant pupils to learning, and in establishing high standards of good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning are supported by their hard work and an ethos of respect for each other and their teachers. Throughout the school, pupils are hard working, happy learners. They apply themselves well and sustain their concentration. Pupils co-operate well, helping each other, and learning from one another. The school has a cheerful, well-disciplined atmosphere.

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

- 3.4 The curriculum is good and supports the school's aims of providing the best possible academic education and contributing to the pupils' growth and development. In its breadth and balance, it is suited to all ages, abilities and needs and it covers the different areas of learning. In the senior school, pupils study French, German and Spanish, being able to move from one to another up to the end of Year 9. However, the number who actually choose to study a language up to GCSE has been low in some years, with up to a third of the year not taking any language at all. Art, design and technology (DT) and music offer the pupils plenty of opportunity to be creative and to develop the skills associated with them. The curriculum is timetabled effectively to allow all pupils to benefit from the wide range of subjects offered and when required to receive effective assistance from the learning support department. The previous inspection report mentioned that curricular links were sometimes insufficient between the different stages of the school but this is no longer true and the school's leadership and management at the different levels have effected considerable improvement.
- 3.5 The academic curriculum is supported and enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which has expanded significantly since the previous inspection. Drama is strong: recent productions have included an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* and rehearsals are well advanced for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The programme offers pupils the opportunity to develop interests and hobbies alongside sport, music and drama. It includes participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme where awards are gained at all levels including gold. The pupils' experiences are further enriched by guest speakers and a range of school trips locally, nationally and abroad, for example through World Challenge and rugby tours. Links with the local community are well established, and the school confers public benefits on the local and wider communities. In the prep school, visits from the police and fire brigade take place, and at all ages the school supports local and national charities. School groups perform in the community: at the time of the inspection, a school choir, with pupils, staff, and members from the local area, was rehearsing the Haydn *Nelson Mass*, to be performed in a local church. Local groups use the school's fine facilities, such as its artificial-surfaced games field. The varied range of activities is valued by the pupils who find them rewarding, enjoyable and beneficial in developing new skills, friendships and opportunities to experience new and different situations.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.6 The teaching is good overall. It is usually stimulating, and effective. It is successful in promoting the pupils' progress and largely supports the school's aims, especially that of aiming to be supportive and to understand each individual boy and girl, while insisting that all set themselves the highest standards in work. Teachers know each pupil very well and so this makes it easier to provide for the needs of each as an individual. Some teachers, as when teaching French, use a subtle range of questioning to differentiate between pupils of varying abilities in order to help them achieve their potential. In an English lesson in the lower years of the senior school, the teaching helped pupils to be engaged in using a poem by De La Mare as an inspiration for their own work. As a result, they were able to work at different speeds, appropriate to their abilities and needs, often benefiting from individual guidance, while producing original and imaginative work.

- 3.7 Most teaching encourages the pupils to be interested in and enthusiastic about their lessons. Relationships between teacher and pupils are particularly strong. Pupils clearly trust and respect their teachers' subject knowledge. The best lessons were characterised by a good pace and challenging work. Such lessons also contain suitable questions, often open-ended, and with opportunities for pupils to participate and to develop their interests, causing the pupils to respond well. . Such teaching has high expectations and expects hard work from the pupils. Less successful teaching occurred in those lessons where the more able pupils were not provided with appropriate challenge because the material used was too facile for them, because the pace was too slow, or because the level of response did not allow for individual variations. Teaching at all levels did not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to express themselves in continuous writing of suitable length.
- 3.8 Lessons are well planned and frequently employ a variety of teaching methods and resources which are confidently used to develop learning. Interactive whiteboards are, for example, used effectively, especially in the prep school, while discussion and co-operative learning are regularly used, particularly in the senior school. The attractive, generously-resourced libraries in both the senior and prep schools are facilities well used by the pupils because of the stimulus of the teaching. This represents significant progress in the prep school from the previous inspection. Cross-curricular links are sometimes made in the teaching: two particularly well-developed examples are the 'ICT Across the Curriculum' initiative in the prep school and, in the senior school, artwork devoted to the physiology of the human body. Marking and assessment are uneven in both the prep and senior schools. Across and within departments, and at all levels, marking varies from the occasionally excellent to the perfunctory which includes little diagnostic assessment to help pupils to effect improvement. This lack of helpful detail is mirrored in the assessment comments sent home to parents in the termly reports.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the pupils, including those in the EYFS, is good. They are confident, articulate and well-adjusted young people who display a sense of responsibility, and are evidently happy and secure within the school environment. Their positive answers on the pupil questionnaires reflected this. The school does much to meet its aim of contributing to each pupil's growth in terms of personal and emotional maturity, their moral and spiritual development and their courtesy and concern for others.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. From the earliest years, they display a sense of their own personal worth and that of others, and so their self control is well developed as shown in the way they behave in the classroom and elsewhere. Their spiritual understanding is fostered in some subjects such as English, religious studies and the humanities. However, the pupils' undoubted spirituality is not always developed to the full, and the school has itself identified this. For example, it states that there is scope for the further development of corporate worship in assemblies.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is good. They display a clear understanding of right and wrong, and observe rules willingly for the good of the whole community. Pupils are courteous and respectful towards each other and to adults. In their lessons they form views on contemporary moral and ethical issues, such as those relating to bullying, slavery and human rights. A group of sixth formers supports Amnesty International.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is also good. They relate positively to each other and take advantage of the opportunities to exercise leadership through the captaincy of sports teams and clubs, acting as mentors to younger pupils, or serving on the sixth-form leadership group which includes the two heads of school, the head girl and head boy. In the prep school, all Year 6 pupils are given the opportunity to serve as prefects. The pupils' social confidence is developed through activities such as debating, public speaking, and musical performance. They engage actively with the needs of the wider community through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and in raising money for charities such as the Royal National Lifeboat Institute. Pupils develop an understanding of the workings of English society, including public institutions and services, through their curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and participation in other areas of school life. Pupils of all ages serve as form or class representatives on the school council.
- 4.5 Pupils develop well culturally. Those in the choirs enjoy singing and their choral music is of a high quality. Pupils take advantage of opportunities provided for musical performance. The pupils develop well their talents for art, and pupils' work is prominently displayed around the school, as for example, the well-mounted Year 8 portraits of kings and queens. Pupils take advantage of opportunities to participate in dramatic productions. The rehearsals for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* demonstrated that pupils can recite Shakespearean verse with understanding and sensitivity. Pupils become aware of cultural differences, for example through trying food from around the world and by visits to different places of worship.

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

- 4.6 The pastoral care provided for pupils is good. Staff give support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims, especially the aim of paying particular attention to the quality of personal relationships and to a sense of community in which all pupils and members of staff are valued for their individual contribution. From the earliest days right through to the sixth form, the pupils report that they feel safe, secure and valued.
- 4.7 Effective integration between section heads and form tutors within the senior school and between the head of prep school, the head of infants and the class teachers within the prep school enables staff to give very good support and guidance to the pupils. The key person in the pastoral care is the class teacher in the prep school and the form teacher in the senior school. Class teachers and form teachers often give high levels of support for which the pupils express appreciation. However, some unevenness exists in the effectiveness of care and guidance given to different forms and classes. The morning tutorial time is not always used effectively and purposefully. Effective systems are in place to monitor pastoral concerns and the very good relationships between home and school facilitate a united approach in providing good support for pupils.
- 4.8 Relationships between pupils are strong; they demonstrate mutual respect and show courtesy to each other. The relationships between teachers and pupils are outstanding and constitute a strength of the school. Staff know the pupils well as individuals and so can ensure that they are looked after. Pupils are very clear about to whom they would turn or confide in when necessary. The ethos of the school helps to create confident pupils. Throughout the school pupils understand what constitutes good behaviour both in and out of the classroom and they generally act accordingly.
- 4.9 The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying and dealing constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. Throughout the school, pupils say that bullying is rare and that any that occurs is dealt with promptly and effectively. They say they feel very safe and have confidence that concerns will be dealt with quickly.
- 4.10 The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is implemented successfully. All staff and others concerned receive suitable safeguarding training at the required intervals. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective and include provision for pupils who are ill. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with disabilities. School lunches are healthy and offer a wide choice. The pupils take regular and frequent exercise in curricular times in physical education and games lessons, and by taking part in extra-curricular activities. They are busy pupils who are active physically and mentally. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved its system of registration, and now the attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for at least three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The school is well governed by governors who visit frequently and offer good support to the school. The governing body provides good oversight of the school in line with its aims and discharges effectively its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The governors see themselves as the guardians of the values and aims of the school and as supplying the vision of where the school should be going. They foster the unity of the school. A development plan has had good input from different sections of the school, including the prep school. It is strong throughout on financial planning and strategy but not always in direct educational planning.
- 5.2 The governing body has a good insight into the working of the school and provides support and stimulus for growth and improvement. Over the years, the governors have handled well the large changes that have taken place. The chairman of governors is very frequently in the school supporting and showing interest. He is personally known not just to the staff but also to a number of the pupils.
- 5.3 The governing body is effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. All the necessary checks are done and carefully recorded. All the required policies are in place, implemented and reviewed. The governing body shows a strong wish to go beyond what is legally required to produce humane policies and procedures which benefit the education and welfare of the pupils.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 At all levels of responsibility, including the EYFS, the leadership and management of the school are effective, in accordance with the aims of the school. The previous report noted a poor liaison between the infant and junior schools, and between the junior and senior schools. This has certainly been rectified now and the school now has no problems in this regard. The previous inspection also reported some deficiencies throughout the school, including the behaviour of a small minority of pupils. Most of these have been eliminated or at least significantly improved, which is much to the credit of the principal, the leadership team and the staff as a whole. The principal is very visible in the school, and he and the senior leadership team are approachable and accessible. The whole team has shown determination in seeking to improve the school.
- 5.5 Leadership and management provide clear educational direction in several ways, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the standard of their personal development. The arrangements for self-evaluation, setting priorities and monitoring their implementation are effective. The previous inspection report mentioned a number of points concerned with the monitoring of teachers by middle management. Considerable progress has been made since then. However, middle managers are not always fully successful in monitoring the work of teachers on such matters as the marking of the pupils' work, reporting, and providing suitable challenge to pupils. In its turn, therefore, the senior leadership team is not always fully successful in monitoring the work of middle management. The bursar leads very effectively the non-teaching staff who make such a strong contribution to the success of the school. The school buildings and grounds are well cared for.

- 5.6 Management at all levels is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high-quality staff and ensuring they are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has well-qualified teachers. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff (including volunteers), supply staff and governors.

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

- 5.7 Links between the school and its parents are good, and help to support the education of the pupils. Parents are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school, by being spectators at the many sporting fixtures, audiences at the plays and concerts. In the prep school, an easy access policy is in operation and a number of parents are regularly involved in assisting with the learning in the school. Homework diaries are used effectively as a means of communication between home and school. Parents are very pleased with the education and support provided for their children and with the quality of communication with the school. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are very positive about the school. No concerns were raised by a significant number of parents about any aspect of school life.
- 5.8 Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school and much beyond that. Provision of information to parents is helpful and informative and includes curriculum guides, regular newsletters and access to a dedicated area of the school's website.
- 5.9 Reports are issued termly; these generally give good information about pupils' progress but do not always provide sufficient guidance as to how pupils might improve their work. Each year in the school has at least one parents' evening in each academic year. The school has a complaints policy in accord with the government regulations and handles the concerns of parents properly. In recent years no complaints have gone beyond the initial stage. An active parents and friends association provides regular opportunities for all members of the school community to meet while raising funds both for the school and a number of different charities.

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 setting's overall effectiveness is good. A wide range of approaches to observation and resourcing ensures that individuality and different cultures are strongly promoted, shared and celebrated. Together with well-documented records of children's learning, this ensures that children's needs are well met and their development well supported and closely assessed. The clear promotion of children's welfare, through a warm, family environment and adults' keen awareness of health and safety matters, underpin the school's strong capacity for improvement.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good. Secure record keeping and a wide range of appropriate policies maintain the children's safety, promote equality and eliminate discrimination, ensuring that children's needs are addressed well. However, the duplication of policies between age groups has resulted in some ambiguity and inconsistency. Comprehensive procedures and regular training ensure that adults consistently give a high priority to safeguarding all children. The undertaking and recording of checks on staff on appointment are very efficient. Robust risk assessments cover on-site and off-site activities and are monitored by managers, ensuring that staff have a thorough approach to health and safety. Leaders have a clear vision for improvement and ensure it is achieved through a positive approach to well-focussed training and the provision of a good range of resources, including those on periodic loan from a local centre. Most staff have high expectations of themselves and the children, acting as role models and giving regular praise in order to ensure high standards of behaviour and confident children. The school engages well with parents, carers, feeder nurseries and local education services. Perceptive self-evaluation is well informed by an annual parental questionnaire. Staff benefit from regular involvement in activities to ensure consistency in assessment, though the monitoring of teaching and learning is not fully developed.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is good. Most areas are well-equipped, interesting and welcoming, where children are capably supported by adults, who demonstrate good knowledge of their learning, development and welfare requirements. Relationships at all levels are very strong. Adults make good use of observations, ensuring that planning is tailored to individual learning needs, and every child is suitably challenged or receives the necessary support. In the classroom, a suitable balance of adult-led and child-led activities provides for all abilities in the six areas of learning. Through its self-evaluation the school has recognised that outdoor areas are underused as learning environments and is beginning to plan for improvement.

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

- 6.4 The quality of the outcomes for children is good. Pupils attend eagerly and most achieve well within all assessment areas. They are articulate, offer ideas and show good levels of concentration and motivation. They play and explore purposefully, particularly in the Kindergarten. Classroom displays exemplify good creative work. Progress in developing ICT skills is less evident. Children understand how to keep healthy, make informed choices at lunch and are proactive in their personal hygiene. They understand the importance of keeping safe. Elements of their personal development are outstanding, enabling them to take responsibility for small tasks and develop skills for the future, but limited provision for problem-solving means progress is less strong in this area. Children demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and show respect towards others. They share concerns with adults confidently. They play well on their own and work co-operatively with others.

Complaints since the last inspection

- 6.5 Since the last 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 chairman 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

Mr Eric Hester	Reporting inspector.
Mrs Linda Hamilton	Junior Team Inspector (Head of school, prep, HMC)
Mrs Philippa Foster	Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Mark Allen	Senior Team Inspector (Assistant Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Michael Graham	Senior Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mr Martin Kettlewell	Senior Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Dr Stuart Nuttall	Senior Team Inspector (Former Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Christopher Sanderson	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Sally Gray	Early Years Team Inspector (Former Head, COBIS school.)