

# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **INSPECTION REPORT ON**

### **Northwood Preparatory School**

Full Name of the School	<b>Northwood Preparatory School</b>	
DfES Number	<b>919/6225</b>	
Registered Charity Number	<b>312647</b>	
Address	<b>Moor Farm, Sandy Lodge Road, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 1LW.</b>	
Telephone Number	<b>01923 825648</b>	<b>01923 825648</b>
Fax Number	<b>01923 835802</b>	
Email Address	<b>office@northwoodprep.co.uk</b>	
Headteacher	<b>Dr Trevor Lee</b>	
Chair of Governors	<b>Dr Oliver Bangham</b>	
Age Range	<b>3-13 years</b>	
Gender	<b>Boys 3-13; Girls 3-4</b>	
Inspection Dates	<b>6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2006</b>	

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the School**

Northwood Preparatory School was founded in Northwood in 1910 by Francis Terry and was known originally as 'Terry's'. The school opened with six boys in the vestry of St. John's Presbyterian Church. In 1955 the school became a charitable trust and it moved to its present location in 1982. Since then, considerable building work has been undertaken to convert the existing barns on the

site and to add further accommodation in keeping with the character of the site, which is of significant historical importance. A significant amount of building has taken place since the last inspection.

The school caters for boys aged three to thirteen and for girls aged 3 to 4. Three hundred and twenty-eight boys attend the main school and nursery. At present no girls attend the nursery. Forty-nine boys are in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and sixty-eight boys are in Years 1 and 2. One hundred and fifty boys are in Years 3 to 6 and sixty-one are in Years 7 and 8. Pupils are drawn mainly from Northwood, Rickmansworth, and the surrounding area. Approximately sixty per cent of the pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

Christian principles underpin the work of the school which is designated by the DfES as being a school with a religious character. Governors and teachers seek to provide a caring environment in which pupils are valued for themselves, in which each is given the opportunity of full development, and in which all concerned, pupils, staff and governors strive for excellence. In order to achieve this aim the staff places emphasis on:

- the promotion of a love of learning and the development of intellectual curiosity;
- providing a curriculum that draws on the core requirements of the national curriculum as a minimum and is broad, relevant, and flexible to take account of individuals' talents and aptitudes;
- the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, physical and aesthetic development;
- preparing pupils to contribute to society as responsible citizens;
- the acquisition of skills of independent learning;
- the promotion of pupils' respect for their own achievements and for those of others.

Children entering the Foundation Stage are given informal assessments, as are pupils who enter the school at other times. The purpose of the assessments is to ensure pupils have the potential to thrive and flourish in the school's learning environment.

Standardised tests show that pupils' average ability is above that of the national average and if pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results in national tests will be above the average for all maintained primary schools. Of the 328 pupils, 20 are receiving support for their learning difficulties but no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A majority of pupils speak a range of other languages as well as English, and the seven for whom English is not their first language are supported in developing their skills in spoken English.

National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

Pupils enjoy a rich educational experience which is varied and interesting, and which strongly meets the school's aims, especially to ensure that 'everyone is someone'. The emphasis in the aims on achieving excellence and providing attention to the individual is reflected in the broad curriculum and the very extensive range of activities provided. These opportunities enable pupils to have a rewarding experience as well as reaching the intellectual and physical standards, and making the personal and aesthetic development required for them to enter the senior school of their choice.

Considerable attention is paid to nurturing their physical development. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, for example through the inclusion of drama.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is highly organised with good attention given to all six areas of learning, with an emphasis on the development of children's literacy and numeracy. Very good attention is given by all teachers across the school to the skills particular to each subject but also to the essential skills of speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT).

The curriculum is very well planned with comprehensive and thorough schemes of work and is highly organised and monitored carefully by the senior leadership team. Considerable attention is given to ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to pupils' needs, for example through the wide ranging and imaginative life skills lessons. In line with the aim of having 'a world class outlook', detailed attention is given to the development of the curriculum by the senior leadership team with appropriate input from teachers with subject responsibilities. Information from research projects conducted by individual teachers is used to very good effect in the development of the curriculum. In addition, all staff have an opportunity to contribute to the development of the curriculum through membership of the Strategic Committee, a think-tank owned by teachers other than senior leaders.

Inclusion is the keystone of the curriculum. Great attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to participate fully in all the school's activities. Comprehensive support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties, both in lessons and on occasion with a specialist teacher. A 'Reading Recovery' programme as well as computer aided mathematical support provide additional support for these pupils. Subject clubs or clinics provide extra support when needed by individual pupils. Of particular note is the arrangement where pupils in Year 8 have opportunities to 'tutor' pupils in Year 7. This range and quality of support is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. More able pupils are challenged and this often results in them achieving highly in their entrance and scholarship examinations to senior schools. Pupils the school has identified as talented have good opportunities to develop their talents, for example in languages, sport and music.

Helpful support is provided for the few pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Preparation for the move to senior schools is meticulous. Detailed analysis of test and examination data ensures that tightly focussed attention is paid to ensuring that pupils maintain their strengths but also improve in the areas that have been identified. This information is used very effectively to help pupils and their parents in choosing their senior schools. Very positive comments from senior schools reflect this high quality preparation.

Lessons are complemented by a very extensive and varied range of extra-curricular activities. A striking example of the rich variety is the Year 7 'Company Project' where pupils have set up and run a company. Regular visits to places of educational interest, as well as a good number of residential visits enrich the curriculum.

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

## **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. They are well-grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects and activities and learn to apply them effectively. Pupils make good

progress and achieve good standards in relation to their abilities. The strengths reported in the last inspection have been maintained.

Pupil's attainment in national tests is high. The results of the national tests in Years 2 and 6 over the past three years show that standards overall have been far above the national average. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have made good progress and achieve good standards.

When they leave for the senior school of their choice, pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, have achieved well in relation to their abilities in all areas of the education provided by the school. The number of more able pupils attaining scholarships has increased since the last inspection. Pupils with a particular gift or talent are encouraged and thrive. Their successes are displayed in the 'Hall of Fame' in which all pupils take pride.

Learning skills are developed very well. Pupils reason, think for themselves, and are highly articulate. In lessons, they listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other. In discussions, they carefully argue their points; for example in a life skills lesson where pupils brought articles from a recent newspaper and discussed the issues raised within them. Across the school, pupils read fluently for their ages. They write at length, accurately, fluently and neatly for a wide range of purposes and in a suitable range of styles.

In numeracy, pupils attain good standards. In Year 2 they competently use money, giving the correct change; in Year 6 they correctly solve algebraic equations; and in Year 8 they show a good understanding of calculating speed from travel graphs. Pupils apply their mathematical skills competently in other subjects, such as science and technology. They develop good skills in ICT, which are usefully employed in subjects such as geography and history. Pupils enjoy their work, as they have excellent relationships with their teachers who want them to do well and make lessons interesting and relevant. Pupils settle very quickly in lessons, concentrate well and work hard.

Pupils successfully undertake research both at home and at school. Older pupils have constructed their own web site and others have prepared computer presentations about world faiths. Pupils show good skills in making notes, both in lessons and when researching using the internet. Pupils work successfully independently, and co-operatively, when given the opportunity.

Pupils show considerable achievement in a wide range of activities. In mathematics, pupils have done well in the Junior Maths Challenge. Having been Olympiad silver medallists in 2003, they won a gold medal in 2005. In addition, the pupils have won the Merchant Taylors' School mathematics challenge for preparatory schools in three out of the last four years. Pupils have been awarded distinctions in the Times Educational Supplement Newspaper Day and Website Day. In 2006, they won the Key Stage 3 event. Pupils' achievements in sport include county honours in cricket, squash, tennis and rugby.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate outstandingly spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness. The school's values are to be found in all aspects of its work. The aim that 'everyone is someone' is very well met. A spirit of respect and tolerance is reflected throughout the school, which encourages pupils to treat everyone with consideration and respect whatever their beliefs. The strengths reported on at the last inspection have been successfully maintained.

The school's Christian ethos is very evident and it sensitively takes account of the wide range of pupils' faith backgrounds. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities for spiritual reflection,

especially in religious education lessons and assemblies. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 8, pupils seized the opportunity to discuss spiritual and moral values in the twenty-first century. The ethos of the school is one where similarities are celebrated rather than differences identified. Pupils successfully develop their self-esteem and their sense of identity. Visits to places of religious worship such as a mosque and a Hindu temple enhance pupils' understanding of other faiths. The pupils respond well to such experiences and are interested in learning from each other. One boy commented that 'learning about other faiths helped him to understand his own faith better'. The thorough personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHEC) programme enables pupils to talk about, and reflect on their own feelings.

Pupils show a highly developed sense of what is right and wrong, not just in terms of obeying rules but also in doing what is morally right. In a conversation, a pupil in Year 6 was heard to comment that the reporting of a bully who was also a friend would prove a moral dilemma. The 'Fair Rules' are firmly rooted in the school's ethos and are respected and understood by the pupils who contribute to their formulation. In conversation a pupil commented that 'the rules are for our benefit'. Pupils are courteous to each other and to their teachers and visitors. All staff provide pupils with good role models in their relations with each other and with the pupils.

Pupils show a high degree of social awareness which is evident from the youngest age. Children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to take account of others by taking turns and sharing resources. As pupils move through the school, they are given responsibilities which they undertake conscientiously; for example they act as 'buddies', 'ambassadors' and peer tutors. Pupils make their views known through the pupil forum. Significant support is provided for local, national and international charities. Appropriate attention is given to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a citizen, for example through a recent visit by the local Member of Parliament. The regular residential visits enhance pupils' social awareness and development.

The school ensures that effective use is made of the pupils' wide-ranging cultural backgrounds both in the curriculum and through the ethos it creates. Pupils have a secure understanding and appreciation of their own culture as well as those of others. Cultural values and experiences are effectively broadened through subjects such as drama, music, art, and languages, including Latin. Regular visits to places of educational interest add considerably to pupils' cultural awareness.

The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

Strong teaching is reflected in pupils' good levels of achievement and their success in examinations for entry to senior schools. Teaching is good across the whole school and a significant proportion of teaching is excellent in line with the school's aims. Underpinning the quality of the teaching is the good quality of the assessment of pupils' work. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

Teaching encourages pupils to make the most of their intellectual, physical and creative talents. Pupils are given useful opportunities to think for themselves and to increase their understanding. Through their excellent relations with the pupils, teachers create an atmosphere of mutual trust. This ethos, together with industry, leads to good quality learning.

Teachers know their pupils very well. Well-planned and very effectively organised teaching, that takes proper account of what pupils have learnt before, is at the heart of pupils' achievement. For

example, in an outstanding history lesson taught in the school's learning resource centre, pupils used well-organised resources, including ICT, to research the topic being studied very effectively. Teachers make it clear at the start of a lesson what it is the pupils are to learn and pupils concentrate hard on the focus of the lessons. All teaching is well-supported by a wide range of resources which are of good quality. Teachers make effective use of the interactive boards. The pupils comment that they find learning easier when these boards are used in lessons. Teachers hold very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school is regarded by teachers and pupils alike as the norm.

The pace in lessons is brisk, and effective use is made of time; as a result pupils make good progress. In the strongest teaching, not a minute is wasted and lessons are imaginative and very dynamic. For example in a science lesson about solubility, 'Rosie', a dog, had 'messed' with the materials to be used prior to the lesson and pupils were challenged to sort the mixture without using their hands. Teachers make effective use of questioning, both to challenge pupils and also to consolidate their learning. In an outstanding French lesson, very good questioning, excellent pace, together with imaginative use of body language, enabled pupils to improve their skills considerably when stating their preferences of school subjects.

Teachers have a secure command of the subjects they teach. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This understanding was very apparent in a very effective lesson where children were learning positional language in mathematics. Specialist teaching is very effectively used with older pupils. The combination of specialist physical education teachers and a professional coach in a games lesson that was observed enabled older pupils to improve their skills in playing rugby considerably.

Well-defined support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties, both in lessons where classroom assistants are deployed to good effect and, where necessary, through support from a specialist teacher. Appropriate support is provided for the few pupils who are still developing fluency in spoken English. Good attention is paid to the needs of pupils the school has identified as being more able. Older pupils are taught in classes based on their abilities, and in the case of mathematics, from Year 3 onwards. In lessons, work set is challenging and appropriate support is provided for the pupils the teachers know will need it. In the best teaching, teachers skilfully pose open-ended questions such as 'explain your thinking' or 'what makes you think that?' In these successful lessons, pupils' ideas are picked up by teachers and used to good effect.

Teachers regularly and thoroughly assess their pupils' work. In the Foundation Stage, effective use is made of the National Foundation Stage Profile. Across the school a wide range of assessments is used, including the nationally standardised tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. Excellent analysis is undertaken of the results of national tests, entrance examinations, and tests set by the school. The information is used to very good effect, to plan and develop the curriculum, and especially in the preparation of pupils for their entrance examinations to senior schools. Across the school, targets are set for pupils to aim for and in the 'senior school' these are discussed with parents and pupils together.

Teachers' marking is thorough and undertaken conscientiously. Good attention is paid to providing praise and encouragement. Pupils report that advice about improvement is often given orally. Pupils are not always clear about the meaning of the grades they are given, as a degree of inconsistency exists between the systems employed in different subjects.

The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

## **THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

The care that the staff give to the wellbeing of the pupils is outstanding, in line with the school's declared aims. Very conscientious attention is paid to pupils' welfare, health and safety. Excellent relationships and a caring atmosphere prevail throughout the school, which has successfully built on the good provision reported at the last inspection.

The school is very successful in creating a caring environment where 'everyone is someone'. All staff provide pupils with high quality support and guidance. Parents are very appreciative of this. Pupils are keen to support each other and take pride in their achievements and those of others. In conversations with inspectors, pupils spoke well of the school and were proud of it. They commented that the school was very caring and very friendly. 'Staff make a real effort to be kind to us and they want us to do really well' commented older pupils.

The effectiveness of the school's arrangements for pupils' care, is seen in the way in which pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and faiths, work and play together exceedingly well.

Pupils readily indicated that they would be willing to confide in an adult should they be experiencing difficulties. All staff, including teaching and other staff, provide very good role models for the pupils through their strong teamwork and positive relationships. The headmaster and his wife give very freely of their time. Through their hard work and dedication, they provide an excellent model of the caring and family nature of the school.

Very effective pastoral arrangements are implemented consistently, and overseen thoroughly by the pastoral care group. Nothing is left to chance, a hallmark of the school's organisation. Excellent arrangements promote good behaviour and these are underpinned by the 'Fair Rules'. Pupils follow these and are proud of them, as they have helped to formulate them. The code of conduct is supported effectively by arrangements such as 'the word of the week' to further promote the school's ethos. For example in Year 1, pupils and their teacher tried to make butter by shaking cream in order to demonstrate the value of 'perseverance', the current word.

Thorough and conscientious attention is paid to guarding against bullying and harassment. Pupils are confident of the school's response should an incident take place. The pupils showed that they were familiar with the school's procedure and knew what to do. A number of pupils commented that 'we are a telling school.'

Emphasis is placed on healthy living. Food is carefully prepared to be nutritious and also to respect pupils' religious backgrounds. Teachers and kitchen staff monitor what pupils have to eat. Healthy lifestyles are highlighted in the science and physical education curriculum. A recent innovation has been the construction of a fitness trail and fitness club.

Successful arrangements are in place, and implemented very effectively, to safeguard and promote pupils' health, safety and wellbeing. Attendance registers are completed correctly. Prompt checks are made should a pupil be absent without an explanation.

Very conscientious attention is given to child protection. Significant improvement has taken place since the last inspection. Detailed procedures are in place and implemented effectively. The policy is up-to-date and used consistently by staff who have received the necessary training. Child protection is an element of the induction provided to all staff new to the school. Criminal

Records Bureau checks have been made on staff and these checks are central to the school's recruitment arrangements.

Fire protection is thorough and overseen very effectively by the site manager. All appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. Fire risk assessments are up-to-date. Effective use of an external consultant, together with the implementation of well constructed procedures ensure that secure arrangements are in place to ensure health and safety and to eliminate risk wherever possible. Thorough risk assessments are made for educational visits, including residential visits.

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

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the education their children receive and value the excellent links they have with the school. Productive links with the community have been developed by the school to the benefit of the pupils. Improvement has been made to the information provided for parents, and the strengths highlighted in the previous report have been successfully maintained.

In their replies to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, parents showed their particular appreciation of the teaching and the progress their children make, the curriculum, the attitudes and values promoted, the standards of behaviour, and the extra-curricular activities. No concern was raised by a significant number of parents. Inspection evidence confirms parents' positive views.

Useful opportunities are provided for the involvement of parents in the life of the school. Parents' particular expertise is used effectively in the curriculum. For example an osteopath and a physiotherapist came to talk to pupils during national 'Back Week'. Parents help with educational visits and with sporting fixtures. An energetic Parents' Association organise social and fundraising events. Money raised benefits the charities the school supports and also the pupils through the purchase of equipment.

High quality, regular and frequent information is provided for parents. The school goes to considerable lengths to keep parents well informed, even to the extent of texting them in bad weather. Parents comment that communication with the school is excellent and that they find the school's website user friendly and helpful. Detailed curricular information is to be found on the website so that parents know what is to be covered in the curriculum in each specific year group. Frequent and well-produced newsletters, reflecting to no small extent the hard work of the headmaster's wife, keep parents up-to-date with the life of the school. Very informative parent handbooks are provided for the nursery, and junior and senior sections. For example, these clearly outline with simple flow charts how to contact the school, and what to do regarding head injuries.

Parents are provided with regular, useful and detailed information about their children's progress. Reports provide parents with a clear indication of their children's progress and suggest where improvements are needed. Parents comment that the staff see it as being important to ensure that they are kept well-informed about their children's progress. 'Reports are never a shock' commented a group of parents. Meetings between teachers, pupils and parents to set targets for pupils to aim for, as well as parental consultation evenings are seen by parents as being very helpful. Parents with pupils who have learning difficulties are kept well informed and their views sought. Parents are particularly appreciative of the information and advice they receive when making their choices of senior school.

The small number of parental concerns is handled with due care. The vast majority of parents who completed the questionnaire indicated that the school handled any concerns thoroughly. Parents have access to an appropriate complaints procedure. The headmaster and staff are approachable and accessible, creating an atmosphere in which parents are made to feel welcome.

The school has well-established links with the local community, which benefit the pupils. The choir visits local homes for elderly people. The school is an active member of the Saracen's rugby club community team.

The school supports a wide range of charities. A new charity, the Francis Terry Foundation, has been established to support members of the school community in their work with the underprivileged at home and abroad. Projects supported include Tsunami Relief work in Sri Lanka, where two members of staff were actively involved in relief work in the country. In addition other local, national and international charities are supported.

The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

Excellent governance ensures that a good quality of education is provided for all pupils at every stage, in line with the school's aims. The strengths reported on previously have been successfully built on.

The structure of the governing body is well defined and enables it to provide very effective oversight of the school. Members of the governing body offer a wide variety of relevant skills and expertise to the school. The governing body is strongly committed to its role and also to working as a team, as seen by a recent day spent with the headmaster teambuilding and discussing the school's long-term future.

The governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and take them very seriously. The governors strongly support the aims of the school which are used as a tool in decision-making. An example of this is the decision to make the common room inclusive to all staff.

In conjunction with the headmaster, governors have produced a very clear and detailed 'strategic matrix' for the future development of the school in terms of accommodation, academic and personal provision. Plans have precise success criteria, time scales and financial provision. Very concise formats of these plans are provided for all members of staff on small cards for easy use. The science and technology building erected since the last inspection, the well-advanced plans for the construction of a performing arts building and for the improvements to the sports hall, clearly show that governors are financially prudent and plan well in advance.

The governing body provides high quality advice and guidance. It has a very positive relationship with the staff of the school, and its transparent style of governance is extended to parents. Their views are sought and it is the intention that the 'strategic matrix' is to be shared with parents. The involvement of governors in the school is carefully balanced between showing a keen interest in what is taking place and the exercise of their responsibility of oversight. The governors have a good insight into the working of the school through their committees, visits to the school, attendance at in-service training, and from the presentations they regularly receive from the staff.

The governors are committed to having a 'learning staff' and have invested time and finance in the staff for their professional development and involvement in research projects. This support acts as a very positive stimulus for the growth and development of the whole school.

## **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

Leadership and management are strong. Effective leadership ensures that the school provides its pupils with an education based firmly on the school's values and its specific aim to be a school with a 'world class outlook'. The forward looking leadership reported on previously has been maintained. The success of the leadership and management is seen in the pupils' outstanding personal development, the excellent curriculum, the high quality pastoral care, and in the standards the pupils achieve.

Outstanding leadership is provided by the headmaster who is held in high esteem by pupils, staff and parents. He is committed to the highest personal attainment of pupils and staff alike. The leadership of the senior leadership team (SLT) is also excellent. Close attention to the implementation of the school's aims, together with attention to detail and highly effective organisation, are the hallmarks of their work. Detailed, thorough and relevant policies are in place and are implemented consistently. The headmaster and SLT have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement as a result of the thorough systems they have established for the monitoring of all aspects of the school's work. This information is used to good effect in the construction of the comprehensive 'strategic matrix' for improvement.

The management of staff with subject responsibilities is good, but at times at the expense of leadership. They have drawn up appropriate policies and procedures to guide their subjects. Good attention is paid to the monitoring of pupils' achievement through their regular scrutinies of pupils' work. Their leadership in areas such as teaching is satisfactory but it is not as advanced as the management aspects of the subjects. The development of such leadership has been identified by the school as an area that needs to be improved.

The management of support for pupils with learning difficulties ensures that pupils who need support are identified and that appropriate support is provided.

In line with the school's aims, very close attention is paid to the development and retention of all staff, teaching and non-teaching. The 'world class outlook' is very effectively promoted by the emphasis placed on research by staff and on gaining nationally recognised qualifications through organisations such as the National College for School Leadership. The effective 're-branding' of the school with a new logo and colour scheme adds considerably to the overall appearance of the school and its documentation.

Detailed and thorough arrangements are in place to induct staff new to the school, including provision for newly qualified teachers. Planned developments to the curriculum and to promote pupils' welfare have been supported by training both inside the school and further afield. Performance management is well established, but its administration lacks a little of the sharpness usually found in the rest of the organisation of the school, and would benefit from a little fine-tuning.

The prudent management of finances ensures that a good level of resources is available. The accommodation is of high quality and is very well maintained. It contributes considerably to pupils' achievement and personal development. The routine administration of the school is very efficient. Communication is of a high standard, as very effective use is made of ICT. For example, plasma screens in the foyers outside classrooms carry up-to-date information as well as

news about a range of school activities. Staff communicate very easily with each other as they use a shared area on the school's intranet.

The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Overall Conclusions**

The school is very successful in its aim to provide an education 'where everyone is someone' in a school which takes account of world-wide innovation and expertise. Pastoral care is outstanding. The excellent provision made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, together with strong teaching and a very stimulating and well-organised educational experience, provide an environment in which pupils are happy and achieve well. Pupils speak well of their school and are proud of it.

Pupils are well educated and achieve good standards in relation to their abilities, including those who are more able as well as those who have learning difficulties. Pupils are successful in the creative aspects of the curriculum as well as in sport.

The headmaster provides outstanding leadership which is appreciated by pupils, staff and parents. He is supported by a very effective senior leadership team. Their leadership and management ensure that pupils and staff respond well to the high expectations set for them. Team-work among the staff is of a high order. Teachers with subject responsibilities manage their departments effectively but at times at the expense of leadership. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. The governors fulfil their responsibility very effectively and work very closely with the leadership team to provide an education that meets the school's aims and values. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Very significant and wide-ranging improvement has been made since the last inspection. Teaching is better, the use of ICT has been effectively extended, more able pupils have opportunities to work independently on challenging tasks and appropriate support is provided for the few pupils with learning difficulties. The strengths reported previously have been maintained.

The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

In order to improve further, the school should:

continue to implement its well constructed strategic plan;

take the opportunity to enhance further the expertise and leadership capacity of teachers with subject responsibilities.

No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

## **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspection was carried out from 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, and parents, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

### **List of Inspectors**

Rod Sharman	Reporting Inspector.
Martin Bruce	Headmaster IAPS school.
Vaughan Jelley	Deputy Head IAPS school.
Judith Marles	Former Head of Nursery and Pre-Prep, IAPS school.
Julie Moores	Deputy Head IAPS school.
Andrew Wilcockson	Head of Department IAPS school.