



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**SKIPPERS HILL MANOR PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Skippers Hill Manor Preparatory School

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Full Name of School    | <b>Skippers Hill Manor Preparatory School</b>  |
| DfE Number             | <b>845/6038</b>  |
| Address                | <b>Skippers Hill Manor Preparatory School<br/>Five Ashes<br/>Mayfield<br/>East Sussex<br/>TN20 6HR</b> |
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| Email Address          | <b><a href="mailto:info@skippershill.com">info@skippershill.com</a></b>                                |
| Headmaster             | <b>Mr Timothy Lewis</b>  |
| Proprietor             | <b>Skippers Hill Manor School Limited</b>  |
| Age Range              | <b>4 to 13</b>   |
| Total Number of Pupils | <b>136</b>   |
| Gender of Pupils       | <b>Mixed (70 boys; 66 girls)</b>   |
| Numbers by Age         | <b>4-5 (EYFS): 10    5-11: 89<br/>11-13: 37</b>  |
| EYFS Gender            | <b>Mixed</b>   |
| Inspection dates       | <b>20 Sep 2011 to 21 Sep 2011<br/>17 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011</b>                                       |

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in November 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 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

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

# CONTENTS

|  | Page      |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>(a) Main findings</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>(b) Action points</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| (i) Compliance with regulatory requirements  | 3         |
| (ii) Recommendations for further improvement   | 3         |
| <b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| (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   | 6         |
| <b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| (a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils  | 7         |
| (b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety  | 8         |
| <b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| (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        |
| <b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| (a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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        |
| <b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>   | <b>13</b> |

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Skippers Hill Manor Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of four and thirteen. The school is situated in 32 acres of countryside overlooking the Weald in a village in East Sussex. It was founded in 1945 as a boarding school for boys, becoming co-educational in the 1970s with both day and boarding pupils, and eventually admitted day pupils only from 1991. The founder's daughter and her husband took over the management of the school in 1998, and in October 2010 the ownership transferred to Skippers Hill Manor School Limited, a company limited by guarantee. The school is one of a group of four which is administered by a director, who is supported by a board of advisers drawn from education and industry known as the education committee.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 136 pupils on the roll, of whom ten were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 89 were in Years 1 to 6, and 37 were in Years 7 and 8. There are approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. Pupils come from families with a variety of backgrounds and live within a twelve miles radius of the school, mostly from the surrounding villages and towns. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and none is learning English as an additional language. Twenty-four pupils have been identified as having special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), but none has a statement of special educational needs. From standardised tests, the ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection, the age at which pupils can join the school has risen from three to four and the school has embarked upon a refurbishment programme, including the provision of a new library, an information and communication technology (ICT) suite, classrooms and toilets. Improvements have also been made to the all-weather courts.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide a vibrantly happy and stimulating environment in which pupils can flourish by having the opportunity to develop independence, self-confidence, self-discipline and self-esteem. It seeks to recognise the needs and talents of its pupils, helping each to fulfil their individual potential by providing equal opportunities for the development of creative, intellectual, moral, physical and social competence. It strives to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of the individual within the community of school and beyond, by organising a range of activities where pupils can succeed and achieve a feel-good factor, be it cultural, academic, musical or sporting. It aims to promote positive links between home and school, and forge and maintain strong associations with the community.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning over time in relation to their ability at all ages within the school. This is the result of the school's encouragement that all pupils should fulfil their individual potential, in line with the school's aims. Pupils also succeed in their academic work because they display excellent attitudes towards their learning and their behaviour is generally exemplary. Provision for those pupils with SEND is effective. Pupils also enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and with each other, and they benefit from good teaching. On occasion, the tasks set in lessons are not well matched to the abilities of the pupils, particularly the more able, and the quality of marking is variable. Since the previous inspection, the library has been relocated and refurbished. An effective curriculum, supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, matches and trips, also enables pupils to gain a broad base of knowledge and skills.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent; pupils demonstrate qualities of exceptionally good manners, courtesy, tolerance and respect in all their relationships, contributing very well to the school community. They reflect carefully on faith issues and have strong moral values. They have a keen social awareness and this is demonstrated by their fund-raising for local, national and global charities. Their cultural awareness is also well developed, through visits to theatres, museums and art galleries, and they gain a good understanding of other faiths and backgrounds through celebrations from around the world. Supporting their personal development is the outstanding pastoral care shown by the staff, who are strong role models. Health and safety, and safeguarding policies and procedures, are given a high priority.
- 2.3 The school fulfils its aims because of strong governance and good leadership and management. Since the previous inspection, sound progress has been made in linking development planning within subject areas to professional development. However, the current school development plan does not contain enough detail to guide its work at all levels. Senior leadership is energetic and is supported by a committed staff team. Whilst the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is carried out, it is not undertaken rigorously or regularly enough. The school carefully promotes strong links with parents who are overwhelmingly positive about most areas of school life. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were particularly pleased with governance, the management of the school, behaviour, the worthwhile attitudes and values promoted and the availability of information and policies. Inspection evidence agrees with these views. A few parents were concerned about the help given to those pupils with SEND but, after investigation, the inspectors believe those concerns to be generally unfounded.

## **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 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that, in all lessons, the tasks set meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able, and that these are reflected in short-term planning.
2. Monitor the quality of teaching and learning more regularly and rigorously and remove inconsistencies in marking.
3. Revise the school development plan so that it is focused on the key priorities, is costed and provides the criteria for success.
4. Develop further the use of the refurbished outdoor classroom for learning experiences in the EYFS.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The overall achievement of the pupils is good. Their success in academic work and extra-curricular activities is in line with the school's aims of encouraging pupils to develop independence and creative, intellectual, moral, physical and social competence. The pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively across a wide range of subjects. From an early age, they reason well, use their initiative and share their ideas and opinions effectively, for example when engaging in 'talking partner' activities. They are articulate and express themselves with confidence, both orally and in writing, be it writing which is imaginative or factually accurate. The pupils have well developed ICT and numeracy skills, and collaborate effectively on paired or group tasks. Their strong creativity is demonstrated, for example, in art work, pottery, poetry or story writing. The presentation of their work is good, demonstrating the concentration and effort they put into it. Those pupils with SEND also make good progress because in many lessons they are given individual help from the teacher, for example in a mathematics lesson focusing on the strategies to be used when combining numbers for various operations. In a few lessons, more able pupils do not make as much progress as they should because the task given is not matched to their ability sufficiently well.
- 3.2 The pupils also achieve well both individually and in school teams and this contributes to their excellent personal development. They are successful in local drama and music festivals, with the choir singing in charity concerts alongside adult choirs and the Grenadier Guards. The school includes county players in hockey, football and athletics amongst its pupils, with some qualifying for county and national finals in athletics. Other successes include winning a French film-making competition and participation in a West End production.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the ages of seven and eleven have been excellent overall in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools, although they have varied from year to year. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, and this was confirmed in lesson observation, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them. Over the last three years, almost all pupils moved on to independent schools when they left Skippers Hill Manor, with an average of eight scholarships or awards being won to senior schools each year.
- 3.4 The pupils' successful achievement is underpinned by the strong relationships they enjoy between themselves and with staff, and their positive attitudes to learning. Their generally exemplary behaviour only diminishes on the few occasions when teachers allow some pupils to call out their answers rather than take turns and listen to each other. Pupils are well motivated, they concentrate and persevere with their work, and they show enthusiasm and enjoyment for their studies.

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

- 3.5 The quality of the curriculum is good and makes an effective contribution to achievement and personal development. It is commensurate with the school's aim to strive to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, which develops the pupils' particular strengths and supports their needs. Good progress has been made in the provision of ICT since the last inspection. A new computer room and a favourable time allocation within the timetable enables the development of good skills as well as an effective application of ICT across the different curriculum areas.
- 3.6 The curriculum is well-suited to the pupils' ages and abilities; it captures their interest and is providing well for their academic, creative and sporting development. The curriculum is successful in that it generally enables pupils to thrive, which is a key aim of the school. All the requisite areas of learning are provided and specialist teaching for older pupils enhances the curriculum. Younger pupils also benefit from a degree of specialist teaching in subjects such as music, French and physical education (PE). Since the last inspection the library has been relocated. It is adequately resourced and shares facilities with the computer room. Subjects are given an appropriate time allocation within the timetable with a focus on literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening skills, all of which are developed effectively. The programme for personal, religious, health and social education (PRHSE) is detailed and comprehensive, including sex and relationships education, awareness of drug and substance abuse, healthy living and citizenship; it reflects well the aims and ethos of the school.
- 3.7 The provision for those pupils with SEND is effective and detailed individual education plans are drawn up. These are reviewed termly when new targets are set and discussed with parents, and strong support is provided either within or outside the classroom. Provision for the more able is organised through scholarship groups after school and, currently, setting for Year 7. The academic development of these pupils is recognised in opportunities for independent research, particularly in the older year groups, although the level of challenge in the curriculum does not always take full account of their capabilities. Curriculum planning across the school is good, generally well documented and provides a smooth progression throughout. It does not give sufficient information about how the varying needs of pupils will be met in lessons or the assessment opportunities that will be taken. With younger pupils, strong emphasis is given to cross-curricular links. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.8 The school provides a wide range of popular extra-curricular clubs and experiences. There are choirs, instrumental groups and many pupils have individual music lessons. As well as clubs such as art, pottery, ballet and judo, there are many activities covering a wide range of sports. It is the aim of the school that all pupils have the opportunity to represent the school. The curriculum is further enriched by organising trips, such as sports tours to Jersey, the Year 8 camping trip in Dorset and visits to places of interest to extend the pupils' knowledge. Pupils take part in drama evenings and plays in school as well as attending several local festivals and art exhibitions. The curriculum is also supported by visitors to the school who speak on a range of relevant subjects. The pupils take part in and support many local events. They are involved in sports fixtures and regional tournaments and competitions together with music, choral speaking and drama festivals. Their contributions for the harvest festival are shared with the elderly and less fortunate people in the area and pupils support the local village fayre. These activities benefit

the pupils by giving them a clear understanding of the activities within, and the needs of, the local community.

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

- 3.9 Good teaching encourages most pupils to make effective progress and give of their best, in line with the school's aims. The teachers' subject knowledge is invariably strong, and they make good use of a wide range of resources, including ICT. In most lessons, lively and enthusiastic teaching enables all pupils to achieve well. Lessons are well planned with a variety of activities which keep pupils engaged, and in the best cases, teachers use questioning well to check on the progress being made. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect, and this adds to the pupils' enjoyment of the topics studied. Behaviour is well managed, lessons are undertaken at a brisk pace and teaching responds effectively to pupils' differing learning needs. On the whole, teachers are well aware of those pupils with SEND and give strong support to individuals with learning difficulties in lessons, or in one-to-one sessions, to ensure that they make good progress. However, in less successful lessons, more able pupils are not given work that challenges them sufficiently well; all pupils are given the same task and sometimes any extension work is given after that task is completed, rather than instead of it. On occasion, pupils were not given as much opportunity to think for themselves because activities were too controlled by teachers or time was not used to best effect, so that learning was less rapid.
- 3.10 Assessment is used well, although the quality of marking is variable. Most marking contains encouraging words, and some gives practical suggestions for improvements which the pupils say are helpful. However, in a few subjects, marking was cursory and, in a few cases, work was not marked at all. Pupils are given regular targets to enable them to take some responsibility for, and contribute towards, their own learning. The targets given on their individual education plans for those pupils with SEND are precise and enable them to make good progress. The pupils' attainment is assessed regularly, through the use of a range of standardised tests, particularly in English, mathematics, reading and spelling. These results are monitored to look for any unusual emerging pattern of attainment, and to identify pupils who may require extra support or those who are more able. However, data are not being used well enough to check that progress over time is as high as it should be for each pupil.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Their personal qualities are developed extremely well and in accordance with the school's aims. A high level of mutual respect exists between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They express themselves and their feelings clearly and have strong self-esteem and self-confidence, which is encouraged by the school's support and awareness of all their achievements and spiritual well-being. Their sensitivity to the wonders of nature is enhanced by the environment in which the school is set. They respond reflectively to stories, such as the empathetic response in an English lesson to the book *Private Peaceful*, and have sympathy for those suffering hardship in various situations. Pupils develop an effective appreciation and understanding of the major religions and this is enhanced by visits to local places of worship belonging to different faiths and denominations.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is exceptionally strong. They articulate their ideas clearly and with conviction. They have an outstanding capacity to distinguish right from wrong. In most lessons, in activities and around the school, they listen, share and want to do what is right. Pupils reflect exceptionally well upon the needs of those less fortunate by giving conscientious support through their international charity work; they raise funds for tsunami victims in Sri Lanka and a shelter for street children in Kenya. Pupils discuss moral issues very well, for example when discussing the importance of relationships making them feel safe, and they reflect in their PRHSE lessons on the consequences of anti-social behaviour on individuals and communities, linking this with bullying and racism.
- 4.4 Pupils have an excellent social awareness and many of the older pupils assist younger pupils who may be in need of a comforting or encouraging word, developing friendships across year groups. Pupils in Year 8 are given ample opportunities to hold positions of responsibility, which they carry out conscientiously. Pupils in Year 2 take it in turns to act as monitors at lunchtime which encourages personal responsibility. All pupils have a good understanding of the democratic process and the school council plays an active role in the school.
- 4.5 Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture enhanced by visits to museums, art galleries and a range of musical events, for example a local jazz day and opera at Glyndebourne. They have an effective awareness of celebrations such as Diwali. Younger pupils also enjoy observing Chinese New Year whilst older pupils are involved in art and dance days relating to different cultures. Pupils have gained valuable multi-cultural experience through a range of visitors to assemblies, including a talk to the whole school about life in Kenya and its different traditions.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent, fostering personal development and academic achievement extremely well. The pastoral care shown to pupils is highly effective, and fulfils the aims of the school by providing a happy environment in which pupils can flourish. The staff provide outstanding support and guidance through the roles of the class or subject teachers and the additional support tutor who is nominated by the individual pupil. The pupils greatly appreciate this extra level of support, believing that this helps staff to monitor their workload well. The headmaster and deputy head offer further guidance as and when needed. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, promote the pupils' self-confidence with praise and encouragement across all activities. Pupils say that they are very well cared for; they feel valued and this gives them the confidence to turn to an adult should they have a problem.
- 4.7 Relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves are excellent, promoting a very caring atmosphere that is evident throughout the school. Older pupils take care of the younger ones, for example by serving lunch or by leading each class out of assembly. The pupils are exceptionally well-mannered and the adults are strong role-models. Whilst a significant minority of pupils commented in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they felt staff did not treat them equally, there was no evidence to substantiate this view; pupils were positive about this issue in discussions during the inspection. Staff know the pupils very well and any issues or concerns are thoroughly discussed at the beginning of weekly staff meetings. The pupils play and work happily together and with a sense of care, empathy and understanding of the needs of others, shown particularly through the buddy system when new pupils join the school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally exemplary, and the positive school rules have been developed by the school council. Pupils believe the rules are fair, and they treat each other with respect and courtesy. They say that bullying is very rare and that, if it happened, staff would deal with any difficulties quickly and constructively.
- 4.8 The arrangements for child protection are excellent and all staff are trained according to their responsibilities in this area. Measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, and health and safety procedures are effective, with risk assessments undertaken for on-site activities and off-site visits. A health and safety committee operates and meets regularly to discuss any issues arising. Electrical testing is carried out and health and safety documentation is thorough. Accidents are properly recorded and suitable facilities are available for those who become ill during the school day. An accessibility plan has been written which is designed to improve the educational provision for those pupils with disabilities. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained and stored. Pupils understand very well the importance of choosing a healthy diet, through the provision of nutritious lunches, and they have many opportunities to participate in physical exercise.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good. The director, supported effectively by his board of advisers, strongly governs and oversees the work of the school, helping to secure the school's aims which enable pupils' achievement to be good and their personal development to be excellent. The education committee, as the new governance group is known, keeps abreast of, and discharges properly, its legal responsibilities for educational standards, child protection and welfare, health and safety. It is involved extremely well in financial and strategic planning, as evidenced in the very recent improvements to, and refurbishment of, the accommodation. It also ensures that material and human resources are provided to meet the needs of the pupils effectively.
- 5.2 The director has a clear vision for the future of the school, understanding very well its strengths and areas for development, and through regular visits takes the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning at first hand. These visits also enable the director to have formal and informal discussions with staff, giving guidance for improvement as appropriate. The school is now working to a new model of governance; as yet no minutes have recorded formally the deliberations of the education committee as they pertain to this school in the group of four. The headmaster compiles a regular report which gives the committee a good insight into the working of the school, its achievements and its challenges. Termly meetings enable future development to be discussed both for this school and across the group of schools, thus providing stimulus for growth and improvement.

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

- 5.3 Leadership and management are good, enabling the school's aims to be successfully fulfilled. The headmaster and senior leadership team, supported by a committed staff, have a clear vision for the future development of the school alongside its director and education committee. This clarity of vision benefits the whole community and is reflected in the good quality of education and the excellent personal development of the pupils. However, at present, the short-term and long-term school development plans do not set out this vision sufficiently clearly in writing. For example, there are no key objectives which are prioritised, no costings and no success criteria, and this lack of detail makes it difficult for staff to support its fulfilment effectively. However, all staff are involved in self-evaluation and development planning of their subjects, including where appropriate any areas for professional development, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. The school has recently introduced a self-evaluation policy which it is intended will review all areas of academic and pastoral development over a three-year period. The monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching through lesson observation is undertaken by the headmaster and deputy head, but this is only formalised once every three years and is not currently undertaken sufficiently regularly or rigorously to have a positive impact on the pupils' achievements. Subject co-ordinators carry out their roles in relation to planning and schemes of work well although they do not yet have the responsibility of examining pupils' books on a regular basis, this being undertaken again by the headmaster and deputy head.

5.4 Policies and procedures are implemented successfully by staff and cover all aspects of school life. Teaching and classroom support staff are deployed well and contribute effectively to pupils' learning and welfare, particularly for those pupils who have SEND. In-service training opportunities are satisfactory and appraisal is an effective feature of staff development. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are a high priority, with all staff trained in these areas including safeguarding. Non-teaching staff make an important contribution to the pupils' personal and academic development through their support roles within the school community. The recruitment of staff and volunteers is carefully carried out and a central register records the details appropriately. The accommodation of the school has improved significantly in recent months and now effectively supports the curriculum and pupils' achievements. The grounds are maintained, and used for both academic learning and recreational play, extremely well.

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

5.5 The school promotes excellent links with parents, carers and guardians, which strongly support the pupils' welfare and progress, in accordance with the aims of the school. The strength of this partnership is reflected in a high level of satisfaction by the parents with what the school provides and in its communications with them.

5.6 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are extremely supportive of the school and happy with the range and breadth of the educational experience their children receive. All who responded were positive about governance, the management of the school, behaviour, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values, and the availability of information and policies. The inspection team agree with these views. A small minority of parents raised issues regarding the help given to those pupils with SEND. After investigation, the inspectors believe that these concerns are generally unjustified.

5.7 Parents are warmly welcomed at school events and matches, and are closely involved in the life of the school, often through events organised by the Friends of Skippers Hill association. Parents and grandparents help as volunteers within the school, for example in hearing pupils read, as well as on trips or contributing to other events.

5.8 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils have access to all relevant information about the school. Current parents also appreciate and value the excellent communication promoted, either by direct contact or through regular newsletters. Communication is aided further by an updated website, the headmaster's blog, a television screen in school and well-used notice boards which keep parents informed about many aspects of their children's education. Information about pupils' progress and attainment is frequent and helpful. Written reports are provided each term; the full reports give good detail about pupils' progress in subject knowledge, skills and understanding, and the best include targets for future improvement. Meetings for parents are held three times a year and give further information about progress.

5.9 Parental concerns are dealt with promptly, carefully and effectively with detailed records kept, and the school has an appropriate policy for dealing with any formal complaints should they arise. The school operates an open-door policy and parents appreciate the easy availability of the headmaster and all staff.

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

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

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

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS setting is outstanding, and careful attention is given to every child's needs. Children feel safe, secure and valued, and parents are confident that staff do their best for each child. Staff know the children very well and have a good understanding of each child's circumstances. Children are recognised as individuals; their preferences, strengths and weaknesses are assessed and staff strongly and consistently support their learning. The setting is well organised and its continual improvement since the previous inspection can be seen in the new buildings, resources, and the enhanced outside play area.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Day-to-day organisation is well managed by experienced staff who ensure that children are safeguarded and policies are implemented to provide equality of access and opportunity. A clear understanding of requirements is reflected in high quality classroom practice and in the information provided for parents, who are very supportive and pleased with the strong start to their children's education. Staff work effectively in partnership with parents to inform them of the learning and progress of their child and to celebrate children's achievements. Reports are detailed and helpful, and parents are encouraged to continually engage in a dialogue with staff. The provision is constantly improving as a result of critical self-evaluation and review of practice, and staff have a clear vision for the EYFS as part of the whole school development. Effective opportunities are taken for training and appraisal. 'Messy', quiet and shared spaces are used very well so that a range of resources can be effectively deployed in this very recently completed building.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding, with a welcoming, interesting and stimulating environment for children to enjoy. The extensive school grounds provide a magical experience for young ones to discover the changes in autumn and extends the classroom in good weather. However, the children are not yet able to make full use of the developing refurbished outdoor area for learning experiences. Planning ensures that activities engage and absorb children. Staff observe children's learning rigorously in child-initiated and adult-led activities and record how the needs of individuals will be met. Children are encouraged to demonstrate their curiosity and imagination, and to offer ideas readily in discussion. Specialist music and games staff contribute very well to the children's early development of skills. Relationships are excellent. The setting strongly promotes the children's welfare and healthy eating habits. Pupils are encouraged to conduct themselves safely around the setting. Routines such as hand-washing at appropriate stages during the day are well established.

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

- 6.4 Children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and outcomes are outstanding. Literacy and numeracy skills develop well and children have a strong knowledge of early writing and phonics at the end of the EYFS. They are able to write simple sentences. Children can sort a variety of items and explain how or why they are part of the same group. They securely reach, and many exceed, the early learning goals by the end of Reception. They greatly enjoy their time in school and are enthusiastic and active learners. The children practise high standards of hygiene, and feel safe when in and around the premises and grounds. They show high levels of independence, imagination and concentration, demonstrating confidence and a willingness to participate and make decisions. They behave well in a variety of situations and are extremely co-operative. Children in EYFS benefit from the close proximity of older pupils who sit with them in assembly and assist at times in the classroom.

**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 director, 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 Stephen Player

Mrs Marjorie Harris

Reporting Inspector

Headmaster, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector