

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Bickley Park School

Full Name of the School	Bickley Park School
DCSF Number	305/6002
Early Years Number	EY240658
Registered Charity Number	307915
Address	14 to 24 Page Heath Lane, Bickley, Bromley, Kent BR1 2DS.
Telephone Number	020 8467 2195
Fax Number	020 8325 5511
Email Address	info@bickleyparkschool.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Paul Ashley
Chair of Governors	Mr John Tiley
Age Range (of the whole school)	2½ to 13
Gender	Girls 2½ to 4; boys 2½ to 13
Inspection Dates	2nd to 5th November 2009
Early Years Age Range	2½ to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	12th to 13th October 2009

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 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 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS 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 registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the Statutory Framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Bickley Park School is a preparatory school for boys aged from two and a half to thirteen years; there are a few sibling girls in the nursery. It is situated in Bickley, just outside Bromley, a suburb to the south east of London. The school was founded in 1918 and became a charitable trust in 1963. It is governed by a board of governors. It occupies three sites: preparatory department, pre-preparatory department and sports fields.
- 1.2 The school is committed to providing an environment that is stimulating, challenging and exciting. The school aims to get the best from every child by setting high standards through dynamic teaching, by focusing on the child as an individual and by ensuring that there is a positive, encouraging and motivating atmosphere. Good manners and common courtesy are expected and an appreciation and respect for difference is promoted. The school seeks to build a good parent/teacher relationship. The school believes every child can succeed.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in March 2003, the accommodation has been extended to add facilities for music, a new sports hall, a covered swimming pool and a theatre. Premises for some Reception pupils are temporary until January 2010 pending the construction of three new Reception classrooms. The present headmaster has been in post since 2005.
- 1.4 The school is attended by 380 pupils. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) caters for 106 pupils, 20 of whom are girls. The pre-preparatory department caters for 96 boys and there are 178 boys in the preparatory department. Approximately a quarter of Year 7 joins the school from the maintained sector each year. The school provides additional modern languages support for these pupils.
- 1.5 Standardised tests indicate that the ability of the pupils covers a wide range; however most pupils are of above average ability. Pupils do not take national tests. Twelve pupils identified by the school receive support for learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). The school does not provide support for the 10 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.6 The school draws pupils from a range of professional or business backgrounds; approximately one in five are from minority ethnic groups, and the largest of these groups is of Asian origin. Most pupils continue their education in independent senior schools; a few proceed to selective maintained schools. The school awards several bursaries each year.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.
- 1.8 See Section 7 for the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The education provided is of high quality in the preparatory department, sound in the pre-preparatory department and good with some outstanding features in the EYFS. The school generally achieves its aim to provide an environment that is stimulating, challenging and exciting. In most respects this is better than at the time of the previous inspection, though the provision for pupils with LDD and EAL now has some shortcomings and is not as effective. The school is aware that it needs to supply more help for staff in providing for lower sets and more time for the management of learning support.
- 2.2 The pre-preparatory curriculum provides a wide range of educational experiences suitable for pupils of this age. English and mathematics lessons develop basic skills well and a topic-based approach is effective in other subjects. The preparatory department provides good opportunity for all pupils to access a wide range of subjects. Home economics, design and technology and a wide range of languages are provided, and games or physical education (PE) lessons take place every day. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught both as a separate subject and in other subjects such as science and design and technology.
- 2.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well planned and includes topics pertinent to pupils' age and stage of development. It reflects well the school's aims and supports the development of a positive ethos. There are units on relationships, environmental awareness and being a citizen, which includes the law, politics and money management. Also included are units on lifestyle choices and being confident, independent, responsible and safety aware, and on making informed choices.
- 2.4 Extra-curricular provision is very strong, catering for a wide range of interests, sports and the arts. Activities sessions are popular and well attended. Though adequate, after-school care provides older pupils with little to do if they have no homework. A wide range of educational visits and trips links the curriculum well to the wider community; at least one takes place every term for each class to cultural, religious or historical places. School journeys in the UK and overseas broaden pupils' horizons. A five-day adventure week for Year 8 in Bude and a trip to France build their confidence prior to transfer to senior school. Pupils' knowledge is widened by visitors to the school, such as the police, and by talks from representatives of other professions.
- 2.5 The transition from EYFS into Year 1 is seamless; staff get to know the pupils before they move up and pupils' needs are discussed at staff meetings. The transition from Year 2 to Year 3 works well, with substantial liaison taking place between teachers and some cross-over teaching. The preparation for senior schools is well organized, with extensive guidance for parents and pupils provided.
- 2.6 Curriculum planning is sound in the pre-preparatory department and strong in the preparatory department. Long- and medium-term planning is thorough, itemizing in detail what takes place each week and in each lesson. In the preparatory department, concise policies and schemes of work are in place for each subject.
- 2.7 The school has made the decision to be more selective in its intake and to provide learning support in class rather than by withdrawal from lessons. In the preparatory department, groups are set by ability, with lower ability English sets taught by specialist staff. Some discrepancy exists between the learning support list and individual education plans (IEPs), and some IEPs are out of date and provide limited guidance for teachers. The school was

unable to provide a learning support list for the pre-preparatory department. A small number of pupils are not fluent English speakers and they have difficulty understanding in some lessons but no specialist support for pupils with EAL is provided. There is no specific provision for the several dyslexic pupils; parents are advised to make their own arrangements.

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

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Pupils are good learners and achieve well at all stages. This is better than at the time of the previous inspection. The school achieves its aim to get the best from each child and enable each child to succeed.
- 2.10 Pupils demonstrate well-developed critical skills; for example, when they appraise texts in English or the work of artists in art. Creativity is widely evident across the curriculum, with pupils eager to explore and develop their own ideas. Creative writing is strong and pupils express themselves well in the arts.
- 2.11 Pupils are articulate and eager to engage in conversation with adults. They listen attentively when asked to, and readily absorb information when listening. Pupils make use of the libraries to research or to read for pleasure. Most are confident readers and can read aloud with expression and intonation. Pupils' writing is well developed: handwriting is strong, spelling and grammar are generally accurate and their work is well structured and imaginative. Their vocabulary is extensive. They are mathematically competent, and use their skills appropriately in other subjects. Logical and independent thinking is widely evident. Most are confident and competent users of ICT and use computers well when opportunities are presented. Pupils are particularly keen to use the interactive whiteboards.
- 2.12 No discernable difference in progress is apparent in relation to ethnicity. Pupils with LDD or EAL make variable progress according to the level of support they receive. Average ability pupils perform particularly well. The most able make the progress they are capable of.
- 2.13 Achievement in public examinations is high. Some pupils successfully take GCSE Spanish in Year 8. An increasing number of senior school scholarships are achieved. Pupils achieve well in sport, especially rugby and cricket, and they are successful in graded musical instrument examinations and when performing in public.
- 2.14 Pupils' capacity to take notes improves as they progress through the school, but for completeness and accuracy they sometimes copy from the board. Their work is well organised and neatly presented. Pupils work well together in pair, group or team work and are very supportive of each other.
- 2.15 Pupils are eager to learn, they settle down quickly and most maintain their concentration well. They are enthusiastic learners and are eager to participate.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.16 As in the previous inspection, pupils demonstrate well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is excellent in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is successful in its aims to promote pupils' appreciation and respect for difference.
- 2.17 Pupils show spiritual awareness in subjects such as religious education, where they demonstrate understanding of a wide diversity of faiths. They show awareness of the non-material dimensions of life in aesthetic appreciation or when considering big ideas; for example, when debating the topic of evolution versus creationism. They are self-confident and recite poetry or give prepared speeches well. A healthy respect and secure understanding of a wide range of faiths is evident. Pre-preparatory pupils' self-esteem is enhanced by the weekly awards assembly.
- 2.18 They have well-developed moral awareness, understand the difference between right and wrong, abide by the school rules and show some understanding of Parliament and the law in PSHE. Year 5 pupils were mature in their consideration of the moral issues associated with shoplifting. They respect one another's property.
- 2.19 Pupils have well-developed social skills, and they relate well to each other and to adults. They undertake roles and responsibilities reliably, for example, as prefects, sports or house captains. They are supportive of each other and play well together. Good behaviour is the norm and pupils relate well to their peers. They show concern for those less fortunate than themselves and raise funds for charities. The recently formed pupils' charities committee is exploring further opportunities for such work.
- 2.20 They show understanding of various cultures. School journeys provide useful opportunities for them to experience other cultures at first hand. The choir visited New York, which gave pupils insight into life in the USA. The arts are strong and pupils actively participate in school productions and produce imaginative works themselves. Educational visits to the theatre, art galleries and museums extend pupils' cultural experiences and understanding.
- 2.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.22 High quality teaching and assessment is provided at each stage. This is similar to the provision at previous inspection and is consistent with the school's objective of providing dynamic teaching. There is some awareness that the teaching of LDD pupils is inconsistent.
- 2.23 Most teaching provides well for pupils of differing abilities but there are a few lessons in which there are shortcomings in the provision for pupils with LDD. In the pre-preparatory department, learning support is not always available in English and mathematics and teachers sometimes find it difficult to cater for the full ability range. However, support for pupils with learning difficulties is sometimes good; in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils rapidly grasped the basics of algebra through the graduated tasks they undertook and the praise they received.
- 2.24 Teaching successfully emphasises the need for pupils to make the maximum effort. Most lessons are purposeful and stress the importance of hard work. Praise and encouragement are used to motivate them. Pupils are successfully encouraged to think for themselves; in a design and technology lesson Year 8 pupils used the internet to find out about listed

- buildings, in order to help them to redesign the school building, and Year 1 pupils used ICT well in a science lesson to investigate different forms of movement.
- 2.25 Teaching successfully encourages pupils to enjoy learning. The best teaching makes good use of questioning to engage pupils. Such lessons proceed at a lively pace and have a clear sense of direction and purpose. Less successful lessons usually have unclear objectives and are less well planned.
- 2.26 Most lessons are thoroughly planned. Where lesson planning is of high quality, varied activities are provided which are well suited to pupils of all abilities. Most lessons start promptly and proceed briskly. Teaching resources are plentiful and are generally used well. The use of interactive whiteboards is developing successfully in the preparatory department and is established in the pre-preparatory department. The materials and equipment for practical activities such as science experiments are always ready for pupils, and teachers always place substantial emphasis on health and safety. Particularly good use is made of the high quality sports facilities.
- 2.27 Teachers have a close knowledge of the pupils in their classes and cater well for their aptitudes and interests. Lessons form part of a carefully ordered sequence and build incrementally on the pupils' prior attainment.
- 2.28 Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects: for example, in a religious education (RE) lesson, concise explanations and use of scenarios that pupils were familiar with enabled them to understand the meaning of the Parable of the Sower.
- 2.29 Pupils receive plenty of spoken feedback and advice and, with a few exceptions, their work is marked well with encouraging, helpful comments and grades. Pupils' effort and attainment are regularly assessed and totals are entered on the house competition board.
- 2.30 Standardised data is used to identify LDD pupils, and teachers assess pupils' performance in relation to the data. Targets are set for pupils who are underperforming and overall trends influence schemes of work and teachers' planning. Reports indicate progress in relation to school aims and objectives.
- 2.31 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

- 3.1 The overall quality of pastoral care and the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent. This is an improvement upon the previous inspection. The school achieves its aims to focus on the child as an individual by providing a positive, encouraging and motivating atmosphere. Good manners and common courtesy are achieved. In the responses to the pupils' questionnaire, a few pupils said they received too much homework. Inspection findings do not agree; the quantity is appropriate.
- 3.2 The staff provide considerable support and guidance for the pupils, know them well and always act in their best interests. Teachers provide excellent role models for the pupils. Relationships are consistently positive. Competition between houses motivates pupils well; they are keen to acquire house points for good work or behaviour. Pupils' pastoral needs are discussed in weekly staff meetings. Most pupils feel that they can turn to teachers, medical staff or their friends if they have problems. The 'buddy' system, whereby Year 8 pupils are linked to Year 3 pupils, works well as the younger boys look up to the older ones.
- 3.3 A positive approach to behaviour management includes clear expectations and rules. A graduated range of sanctions and rewards is accepted as fair by the pupils and guides them well. Careful guidance ensures that pupils know and respect the school codes of conduct. Anti-bullying receives due attention both in the PSHE programme and in assemblies.
- 3.4 Measures to safeguard and promote pupils' health and well-being are successful. Child protection arrangements are thorough and all necessary measures have been taken to ensure that there are no fire or health and safety hazards. Attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and attendance is good. Provision for pupils who are ill is sound, medicines are properly stored and administered and suitable records of accidents are kept. Sufficient staff are first aid trained and each site has a matron. Risk assessments for practical activities and school journeys are thorough. The school has undertaken a disability access audit and has a suitable plan, thereby complying with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. Pupils are well encouraged to adopt healthy life styles and through PSHE, home economics and science they are shown how to eat healthily. School meals are nutritious and portions are adequate. Arrival and departure arrangements are well organised.
- 3.5 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

- 3.6 As in the previous inspection, links with parents throughout the school and links with the community are worthwhile. The school fulfils its aim to build good relationships with parents. The response to the parents' questionnaire was very positive, with almost all parents who responded expressing favourable views. Inspection findings concur with a minority of parents' concerns about the support provided for pupils with LDD, but inspection evidence did not support the concerns expressed by a few parents about the handling of complaints or the quantity of homework provided.
- 3.7 There are plenty of opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school. The parents' association is very active with social activities and fundraising events such as an 'it's a knockout' competition. Some parents come in to talk about their jobs and some help in the

- library. The parents' forum provides useful opportunities for parents to learn about the school's work.
- 3.8 High quality information is provided for the parents of current and prospective pupils. Reports to parents are issued every three weeks, with full reports twice a year. They are very informative, but it is rare to find targets for improvement included. Opportunities for parents to respond to the reports are useful. Sufficient opportunities are provided for parents to discuss progress; parents' evenings take place twice a year. Weekly newsletters are informative.
- 3.9 Helpful links exist with the wider community. There are strong links with the local cricket club, and with a local senior citizens home where pupils sing carols at Christmas and invite residents back for a concert. Harvest produce is taken for the use of senior citizens. There are termly visits to the local church. Pupils read poetry to commuters on the platform of the local train station. They raise money for charity and are sponsoring a child in Kenya.
- 3.10 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].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The school benefits from high quality governance that ensures the school achieves its aims and is even better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- 4.2 The governing body contains a wide range of expertise. Governors attend training annually to keep them up to date with the requirements of their role. The full governing body meetings are supported by an appropriate range of sub-committees. Minutes and agendas indicate that they maintain an effective oversight of the school. Their main concerns are with buildings, health and safety, finance and marketing and comparatively little attention given to the quality of education provided. Periodic presentations from members of staff give them insight into educational issues. Careful strategic planning has enabled considerable improvements to be made in the accommodation, facilities and staffing.
- 4.3 Governors maintain positive relationships with the school, and provide advice and guidance as and when appropriate. They attend school functions where they talk to parents to hear their views. This enables them to gauge parental opinion informally, and have some insight into the work of the school. The governors are very supportive of the improvements the school has wished to make.
- 4.4 The governing body exercises its responsibilities for health and safety and child protection effectively. There is a health and safety committee which reviews all aspects of the school and receives reports from an external agency, and the child protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The school benefits from strong leadership from the top which has enabled it to achieve its objectives, make substantial progress since the previous inspection and provide a high quality of education and care, but there are some shortcomings. The school is aware of areas needing improvement, which include the management structure and specialist provision for pupils with LDD.
- 4.6 Throughout the school a positive atmosphere is evident and morale is good. The senior management team functions effectively, and communication is efficient. Though the school runs smoothly, there is an inequitable distribution of work at senior management level and insufficient time is provided for the co-ordination of the pre-preparatory curriculum and learning support. Pastoral and academic leadership is strong in the preparatory department. Subject departments are well led and effectively managed. The house system is well organised and led effectively.
- 4.7 The school development plan is appropriately ambitious; the planning process involves consultation at each stage and has been effective in driving the school forward. Departmental development plans link to the whole school plan and to staff appraisal targets.
- 4.8 All policies are reviewed annually. Those involving staff are subject to staff consultation. All policies are ratified by the governing body. Most are concise and provide useful guidance to staff but the learning support policy is weak: it does not detail the types or levels of need or the provision that is available or that is to be made.

- 4.9 Sufficient suitably qualified staff have been appointed for most positions, but in the pre-preparatory department pupils with LDD in English and mathematics lessons do not have enough specialist learning support. Arrangements for checking the suitability of staff are thorough. Most staff are suitably deployed in posts matched to their backgrounds but some weaknesses exist in deployment and the time allocated to the management of the pre-preparatory curriculum. Induction arrangements for those teachers who are new to the school are thorough and effective. No newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are currently employed by the school. All teachers are subject to appraisal every two years. The appraiser and the appraised each identify an objective and a third child-focused objective is agreed. An interim appraisal meeting at the end of the first year reviews progress in relation to the targets. Objectives relate to school development plans and to individuals' professional development needs. Training needs, either for individual teachers or for the school, are in most respects suitably identified and included in the training plan, and suitable continuing professional development is attended.
- 4.10 Lesson observation, either by line managers or peers has been successful in achieving a consistent standard of teaching. Periodic reviews of pupils' work are undertaken and have revealed a few inconsistencies in the quality of marking, which are being addressed. Annual review meetings for heads of department ensure that planning focuses on relevant areas.
- 4.11 The school is well resourced; ample books and equipment are provided throughout the school and curriculum, and are used well by teachers and pupils. Considerable investment has been made in the preparatory library since the previous inspection; it is now well equipped with a wide range of up-to-date fiction and non-fiction books, digital material and ICT access to the internet. The library is well used. Library induction lessons are provided and library staff provide resources for topics or specific lessons if asked. Considerable investment has been made in ICT: all classrooms have interactive whiteboards, and teachers are increasingly making use of them.
- 4.12 Sports and games facilities are outstanding, with a first-class sports hall, swimming pool and sports fields. All are used well. All classrooms are well lit and most benefit from high quality display which stimulates pupils' interest in particular topics, provides a stimulus for teaching or celebrates pupils' achievements.
- 4.13 The school runs very smoothly and this is due to highly efficient administration. The school is in excellent decorative order, is maintained to a high standard and provides an environment conducive to learning.
- 4.14 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school largely meets its aims and is aware of most of its weaknesses; it is well placed to improve further. It provides an environment that is stimulating, challenging and exciting. It gets the best from every child and sets high standards through dynamic teaching. It focuses on the child as an individual and ensures that there is a positive, encouraging and motivating atmosphere. Good manners and common courtesy are the norm and pupils respect difference. Parent/teacher relationships are positive. The school enables every child to succeed. The quality of education provided is of a high standard in the preparatory department, sound in the pre-preparatory department and good with some outstanding features in the EYFS, but there are some shortcomings in the provision for pupils with LDD. Pupils are good learners, achieve well and demonstrate a high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. High quality teaching and assessment are provided at each stage. The overall quality of pastoral care and the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent. Links with parents and the community are very strong. The school benefits from high quality governance and from strong leadership from the top.
- 5.2 The school has made substantial progress in relation to the recommendations from the previous inspection report. All recommendations have been met. A formal appraisal programme is now in place, professional development has been effectively promoted and staff are monitored. Heads of department now fulfil their duties; the preparatory department library is much improved. A maintenance programme for the school's ICT equipment and science preparatory room is now in place and equipment is maintained to a high standard.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. In order to improve the school's provision further, the school should:
1. extend the specialist provision for pupils with LDD.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 2nd to 5th November 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 12th and 13th October 2009 by two inspectors. The inspectors observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and governors. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr John King	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Balding	Former Head of Department, IAPS school
Mr Peter Bird	Former Deputy Head, IAPS school; currently Headteacher, primary school
Mrs Susan Clifford	Head, IAPS school
Mr Julian Hornsey	Former Head of Department, IAPS school
Miss Jacqueline Scotney	Head, ISA pre-preparatory school
Mr Chris Manville	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Sarah Counter	Early Years Team Inspector

7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

- 7.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage department comprises three Nursery and three Reception classes. It is set in extensive grounds with exciting and challenging play areas. New classrooms are currently being built and are due to open in December 2009.
- 7.2 The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with outstanding features. Staff recognise the uniqueness of each child through observation and the use of a 'key person' system. The partnership with parents is excellent. Staff meet regularly with parents to discuss children's progress, and parents are encouraged to share information with staff on a daily basis. As a result, children make good progress in almost all areas, particularly personal, social and emotional development. Within the provision, there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement through self-evaluation and staff development. Improvements since the last inspection have been made in the development of children's personal skills and opportunities for more creative work of the children's own design.
- 7.3 Leadership and management throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, with some outstanding aspects in the Nursery department. Stringent vetting procedures ensure that all children are safeguarded. All policies and procedures are accurately maintained and updated annually. Monitoring of children's learning and development is good and ensures that all children make good progress. Resources and staff deployment are well managed and provide children with a supportive and stimulating environment. The setting has forged extremely good links with parents and most of those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the educational experience provided for their children. A strong vision is entertained for the future development of the Early Years Foundation Stage within the school as a whole.
- 7.4 The quality of provision throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with outstanding elements. Children in the Nursery classes enjoy a wide range of well-planned, purposeful play activities across all areas of learning. The balance between adult-led and child-initiated activity is a strength of the Nursery. Adults support children's learning effectively through careful observation and assessment of free play activities in the Nursery, and of the more structured activities in Reception. Opportunities for outdoor learning are good for Nursery children, but the use of the outdoors as a learning environment by Reception is unduly limited. Regular safety checks ensure that equipment and learning resources throughout the provision are safe and appropriate for the age of the children. The promotion of health and well-being is good. Positive behaviour and attitudes to learning are promoted by a well-organised rewards programme and good role-modelling by staff.
- 7.5 All children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals, with progress in personal, social and emotional development being outstanding. The children have very good communication, language and literacy skills, and are confident in the use of ICT. Progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy is satisfactory. Enjoyment in learning is evident, particularly in the Nursery, where children participate enthusiastically with a wide range of child-initiated and adult-led activities: for example, when exploring rhythm with musical instruments or when linking letters and sounds through a picture matching game in Reception. Opportunities for independent learning and self-initiated activities are less evident in Reception. Children have very good hygiene habits, which they understand. At lunch-time, they make appropriate choices of food and can explain the importance of healthy eating and being physically active. Children are well-mannered, respectful and tolerant

towards each other and the adults who care for them. Expectations for children's behaviour and learning are high and the children respond very positively to these.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.6 To improve further the good quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. introduce more self-initiated activities for children in Reception and develop the use of the outside as a learning environment for them.
- 7.7 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006.

Complaints Since the Last Inspection

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