



Inspection of
Milbourne Lodge Junior School
by the
Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

“The school provides a rich, educational experience of outstanding quality that is fully consistent with its aim. It creates an atmosphere and an ethos in which pupils flourish.”

“Learning is at the heart of the school and it is successful in meeting its aim of creating an environment in which to Live, Share and Celebrate the Love of Learning.”

“Strong visionary leadership and outstanding management give clear education direction and set the tone for the whole school community.”

“Throughout the school, pupils receive a thorough grounding in knowledge, skill and understanding, and they learn to apply these with confidence and enjoyment in all subjects and activities, and to respond critically and creatively to a range of material.”

“Pupils develop competent skills and attitudes for work and study. They read and write fluently and they are articulate.”

“Pupils demonstrate well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Such awareness resonates with the school’s aim, and is implicit in the ethos of the school and the example set by colleagues in a happy Christian community.”

“The quality of pastoral care, support and guidance given to pupils is outstanding and the staff give close attention to welfare, health and safety.”

“The school is exceptionally well-governed by a board that is committed to the school’s success and continuing development. They show a strong interest in the quality of education provided.”

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Milbourne Lodge Junior School

Full Name of the School	Milbourne Lodge Junior School
DfES Number	936/6161
Registered Charity Number	297656
Address	22 Milbourne Lane, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9EA.
Telephone Number	01372 462781
Fax Number	01372 469914
Email Address	admin@milbournelodge.com
Head	Mrs S E Counter
Chair of Governors	Mrs V J Gillman
Age Range	3 to 8 years
Gender	Boys and girls
Inspection Dates	11th to 14th June 2007

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.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Milbourne Lodge Junior School is a day school for boys and girls aged from 3 to 8 years. It was founded in 1912 and moved to its present site in 1914. It became an educational trust, administered by a board of governors, in 1986. The school occupies a much extended and adapted Victorian House close to the centre of Esher, set in just under an acre of ground and includes a heated outdoor swimming pool. The one-and-a-half acre sports field is a five-minute walk from the school. The school's aim is 'to live, share and celebrate the love of learning' in a Christian setting, in which it welcomes pupils of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, the number of pupils on roll was 183 of whom 76 were under Year 1 in the Foundation Stage, 87 were in Years 1 and 2 and 20 in Year 3. Boys outnumber girls by eight to one. Pupils come from predominantly business and professional families within the local commuting area. Most pupils join the school before their fourth birthdays, with the option for part-time attendance in the Nursery classes. The school is not selective. Standardised test information confirms that the average ability of pupils is above the national average, with some pupils well above and others below. Care is taken to ensure pupils make a smooth transition to school and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator visits all pupils in their home before they start school. The school has identified 12 pupils as requiring some degree of learning support. None of these has a statement of special educational need. Most pupils are proficient in English; of the 36 pupils who come from families that do not have English as their first language, 9 receive support with written and spoken English. Almost all pupils transfer to other independent day or boarding schools either at the end of Year 2 or Year 3.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection, the school has registered under the Religious Character of Schools (Designation Procedures) (Independent Schools) (England) regulations, 2003. The head has been in post since 2002 and a new chair was appointed in 2005. The number of pupils whose first language is not English has increased significantly. The school has undergone an extensive programme of refurbishment and the outdoor facilities have been improved, including laying utilities to the pavilion at the sports field. In addition, substantial investment has been made in resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). Plans are at an advanced stage to build an extension to the school to provide additional classrooms and specialist teaching areas.
- 1.4 The terminology used by the school for teaching and non-teaching staff is as follows: teachers are called colleagues and teaching assistants are called associate colleagues; the special educational needs co-ordinator is called achievement support leader; the gifted and talented co-ordinator is called leader of enriched and enhanced learning; the director of studies is called leader of learning programmes; the pastoral care co-ordinator is called leader of pastoral care and learning; the physical education (PE) teacher and extended day co-ordinator is called leader of physical development and operations; the caretaker and groundsman is called the facilities manager.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The school provides a rich educational experience of outstanding quality that is fully consistent with its aim. It creates an atmosphere and ethos in which pupils flourish. Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the education provided. The school day has been lengthened and the curriculum revised to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to a broad and balanced range of subjects and activities. Increased amounts of time are given to art, design technology (DT) and science, whilst ICT is now central to work in all subjects. A specialist colleague assists pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said they were satisfied with the curriculum provided.
- 2.2 The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is built around the Early Learning Goals and provides an excellent introduction to school life. Activities are offered in a carefully planned and stimulating way, maintaining the good quality noted in the last Ofsted report. In Years 1 to 3, subjects of the National Curriculum, together with drama and religious education (RE) provide a sound foundation for learning. Pupils are taught French throughout the school. The acquisition of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills is systematically developed as pupils move through the school. Topic work consolidates linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological development and allows for links to be explored between different areas of the curriculum. It gives pupils opportunities for research and to find things out for themselves. Varied and challenging opportunities for pupils' social, aesthetic and creative development are strongly encouraged through art, drama and music. Physical development is given a high priority and pupils learn to swim from the Reception year. Specialist teaching in music and PE contributes effectively to pupils' wider intellectual development. Grouping pupils by ability in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 3, allows them to progress at their own best pace.
- 2.3 At every stage, the educational experience of pupils is enriched with visits to places of interest and visiting speakers. In conjunction with a visit to Hampton Court Palace, pupils in Year 2 explored the life of people in the Tudor period, using primary and secondary sources of evidence. Year 3 pupils spoke with enthusiasm about a talk on fire safety, and pupils in Year 1 eagerly discussed their visit to a field centre where they carried out activities such as pond dipping.
- 2.4 Pupils' experiences are significantly enhanced by the high quality extended day programme. The excellent range of activities meets the needs of pupils of different ages and promotes individual interests and new opportunities. The activities are varied and include chess, cooking, music, short tennis and construction to name but a few. Participation is high, particularly in sport and musical activities. Pupils enjoy participating in inter-house sports competitions and matches against other schools. These activities contribute strongly to pupils' educational experience and achievement and to developing their self-esteem and self-belief. Strong links are established with the local community.
- 2.5 The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The priority given to the personal development of younger children in the Foundation Stage ensures they are confident and ready to move through to Year 1. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are given responsibilities for some whole school tasks and these build confidence and a feeling of self-worth. The school's ethos encourages pupils to believe that they have the ability to achieve well in their next school.
- 2.6 Curriculum planning is good and has improved since the last inspection. New or revised subject policies have been written for all subjects. With the exception of personal, social,

health and citizenship education (PSHCE), detailed schemes of work support teaching and learning. The school is aware of its shortcomings in the PSHCE programme, and has included it for review in the current school development plan. The curriculum is reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure skills and knowledge are developed systematically as pupils progress from one year to the next.

- 2.7 Great care is taken to identify and support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). An exemplary system for identifying pupils who need additional help is in place and their progress is closely monitored. When necessary, pupils are withdrawn for individual support with a specialist colleague and individual education plans (IEPs) provide clear targets for their improvement. Parents are regularly informed about the needs and progress of these pupils. Staff are fully aware of more able pupils and those who are gifted or talented and take account of their needs when planning work.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Learning is at the heart of the school and it is successful in meeting its aim of creating an environment in which to live, share and celebrate the love of learning. Pupils achieve good and frequently high standards in relation to their ages and abilities. These are more consistent across all subjects than at the time of the last inspection, with greater attention being given to achievement outside the classroom. Pupils are focused on their work, sustain concentration and are enthusiastic learners. Parents have high expectations and work with the school to encourage pupils to acquire the essential skills and attitudes for work and study.
- 2.10 Throughout the school, pupils receive a thorough grounding in knowledge, skill and understanding and they learn to apply these with confidence and enjoyment in all subjects and activities, and to respond critically and creatively to a range of material. For example, a Reception class pupil wrote: 'I think Jack should not have taken the magic goose, it was stealing.'
- 2.11 No significant difference is apparent in the relative attainment of pupils in parallel classes or in subjects, nor is there any marked difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
- 2.12 By the end of the Foundation Stage, most pupils are achieving or exceeding the nationally recommended levels for pupils of their age. They make good and often rapid progress in their learning and are thoroughly prepared for work in Year 1. As they move through the school, pupils build on the secure foundations established in the Nursery and Reception classes. Although pupils are not entered for the national tests at the age of seven, in work observed in lessons and exercise books, they demonstrated appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subjects they study and develop a wide range of appropriate skills. By the time they leave, pupils are well prepared for their next school. Literacy standards are high. Pupils are confident mathematicians and develop an excellent grasp of scientific concepts that are often advanced for their age.
- 2.13 Pupils achieve individual and team success in a wide range of activities at all stages as a result of the school's encouragement and nurture of talent. In competitive entrance examinations at the end of Year 2 and Year 3, pupils are almost always successful in gaining a place in their first choice of school, and during the last three years, two choral scholarships have been awarded.
- 2.14 Pupils enjoy significant team and individual achievements given the comparatively small size of the school. The Under 7 football team recently competed in a local football tournament and won the Plate trophy. The hockey team are currently cup holders of the Under 7

tournament for local schools. A number of pupils have been selected for a well-known tennis performance programme and pupils with a particular talent, for example in chess, are encouraged to participate in regional and national competitions, where they are regularly successful. In recent years, musicians have achieved a number of commendations in cello, piano and recorder preparatory tests of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Years 2 and 3 pupils spoke with pride of their performance in the concert which took place during the inspection, when singing was of a high standard for pupils of this age. The school attaches much importance to pupils' successes and their achievement is acknowledged in Monday assembly and in the weekly newsletter. Such recognition builds confidence and encourages pupils to participate in activities.

- 2.15 Pupils develop competent skills and attitudes for work and study. They read and write fluently and they are articulate. A Year 3 pupil read confidently and with expression in an assembly. Pupils willingly engage in conversation and were eager to tell inspectors: 'we do so much that is really fun'. They listen carefully to one another's comments and observations, ask questions when they do not understand and are able to explain things clearly. Handwriting and the presentation of work are good.
- 2.16 Pupils have a well-developed grasp of mathematics and simple mathematical concepts at an early age and continue to extend their understanding as they move through the school. They display excellent geometry skills, being able to confidently identify a range of 3D shapes in Year 2 and constructing equilateral triangles from compasses by Year 3. Pupils apply their knowledge and understanding efficiently in other subjects, for example, bar charts in geography and graphs in science.
- 2.17 Most pupils are skilful users of ICT and some are highly competent. Their facility is such that they use ICT quickly and efficiently across the curriculum. Pupils tackle difficult questions successfully; they discuss readily in lessons and often with conviction. They are full of curiosity and eager to participate.
- 2.18 Pupils use their research and note taking skills effectively in independent study and produce well-presented, efficiently organised work. They settle quickly and quietly at the beginning of lessons and this is an improvement since the last inspection. When working in groups, they co-operate well with their peers, persevere and clearly enjoy their work and activities. A happy buzz of activity prevailed in many classrooms. This enjoyment is reflected by parents' comments in the pre-inspection questionnaire.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.19 Pupils demonstrate well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Such awareness resonates with the school's aim and is implicit in the ethos of the school and the example set by colleagues in a happy Christian community. Support for pupils' personal development is stronger than at the time of the last inspection, particularly in the areas of spiritual and cultural awareness.
- 2.20 Pupils' personal development is promoted in a number of areas of the curriculum and in RE, assemblies, circle and reflection times. Without a PSHCE scheme of work and an effective system of monitoring and evaluating current provision, this important area of the curriculum is not taught in a consistent and cohesive way throughout the school.
- 2.21 Pupils' spiritual development is strong. Boys and girls from a diversity of cultural and religious backgrounds show self-confidence and a high degree of self-knowledge. This is a consequence of colleagues building self-esteem and knowledge of personal worth through valuing pupils as individuals and through the support they provide. Pupils show a developing understanding of their own and other people's beliefs and values. They talk

confidently about world faiths, beliefs and observances during morning assemblies. In RE lessons, they appreciate other faiths when lighting the school chanukiah and learning how to play 'dreidle' when thinking about the Jewish festival Chanukah, or when making a poppy seed plait for Shabbat. In circle and reflection time, and at other moments during the school day, pupils explore their own feelings and demonstrate a growing understanding of how feelings and emotions affect others. Year 3 pupils keep personal recollections about school in their own journals. Art, music and the outdoor environment make an important contribution to spiritual development by encouraging pupils to reflect upon beauty and the world around them.

- 2.22 Pupils have a well-developed moral sense, largely due to the value the school places on community life. From an early age, pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of the need to make choices. Older pupils are aware of the simple school rules, which are displayed in some classrooms, and understand that they exist for their own benefit. Pupils respect and understand the system of rewards and sanctions and can explain why they are necessary and say they are fair. They are courteous to one another and to colleagues and visitors. Goodwill and co-operation are evident in all aspects of school life and this enables pupils to develop a strong moral code.
- 2.23 Pupils show a high degree of social awareness and participate fully in the life of the school. In the Foundation Stage, pupils relate positively to one another and are encouraged to take account of others in their daily routines, for example taking turns and sharing toys and resources. As pupils progress through the school they are given more responsibility: for example, performing simple but necessary duties reliably as a monitor, being a 'buddy' in the playground and, for Year 3 pupils, the responsibility of being a house captain or head boy or girl. These responsibilities not only give pupils a sense of self-worth and increased self-confidence but they also encourage initiative and independence. Through raising money for the head boy's charity, pupils learn about their responsibility to support those less fortunate than themselves. Money raised recently has supported not only local and national charities, but also a township school in South Africa, by sponsoring the cost of ICT equipment and a technician.
- 2.24 Pupils increase their knowledge of how public services work when they have visitors from the police, fire and ambulance services. They learn about British government and know the names of some of the more prominent politicians.
- 2.25 Pupils show an excellent understanding of the diversity of their community and the world in which they live. Younger pupils appreciate and enjoy their own and others' cultural traditions by celebrating a range of festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Diwali and through their topic work. Year 3 pupils replied to the register in different languages. Pupils gain an awareness of their own and other cultures through art, drama, French, literature, music and through visits to places of interest and the many interesting displays around the school. Through the link with the school in South Africa, emails are regularly sent from one school to the other. A spirit of harmony and respect is reflected throughout the school which encourages all pupils to treat everyone with consideration and courtesy whatever their culture and beliefs.
- 2.26 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.27 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and frequently it is outstanding. It supports the school's aim and encourages pupils of all abilities, including those whose first language is not English and those with LDD, to develop curiosity and enthusiasm in all areas

- of the curriculum. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teaching helps their child to make progress.
- 2.28 At all stages, teaching is effective in providing a secure foundation for pupils to acquire new knowledge, make progress, increase their understanding and develop their skills. Challenging tasks and well-focused questions were strong features of successful teaching that fostered the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort. It encouraged pupils to learn and think for themselves. A strength is the individual and group support given to pupils in the classroom by associate colleagues in a caring and sensitive way. In the Nursery, pupils made full use of the indoor and outdoor areas and a wide range of activities to develop skills of exploration, observation and problem solving. However, where a classroom is small for the number of pupils, the range and type of activities that can be used is reduced, and it is difficult for colleagues to circulate to support individual pupils. In a small number of lessons, where the work was predominantly colleague led, the scope for pupils to think for themselves and to show initiative was restricted.
- 2.29 Lessons are almost always well planned with suitable and well-chosen activities to promote learning. Colleagues work with the achievement support leader and the leader of enriched and enhanced learning to ensure class work is suitably matched to pupils' learning needs. As pupils learn how to learn, they are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning through investigative work and the effective use of ICT, through which pupils develop their own ideas. The best planned lessons managed time effectively to encourage pupils to behave responsibly. In a small number of lessons, usually when the pace was too slow, pupils became distracted and this affected their behaviour.
- 2.30 Colleagues and associate colleagues know pupils well and keep a close check on their work and progress. Almost all teaching shows a good understanding of the needs and prior attainment of pupils and excellent support is provided for individual pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.
- 2.31 Colleagues have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Their enthusiasm for teaching was evident in a number of lessons, and notably in games, including swimming. Specialist teaching in some subjects, alongside guidance from the achievement support co-ordinator, significantly enhances the learning experience of pupils. Colleagues answer questions in appropriate detail and offer support to boost confidence, and encourage pupils to use their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. For instance in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were encouraged to use their understanding of money to find the correct coins to pay for items from a shopping basket.
- 2.32 Resources to support teaching are good both in quality and quantity and they are used effectively. They are well organised and give variety to teaching approaches. Resources are accessible and mostly located near to where they are most used. The provision of computer and electronic technology is excellent and it plays an integral part in teaching and learning. The library provides an appropriate resource for teaching and contributes satisfactorily to the pupils' learning experience. The school is aware that its temporary location means that there are periods of time when it is inaccessible to pupils.
- 2.33 Assessment systems, which include the use of standardised tests as well as the school's own assessments, are thorough and efficient. They ensure that pupils' progress is carefully monitored and appropriate records are kept to track their progress. The information provided through assessment is used to plan work for lessons, in addition to identifying those pupils who need additional support. In the Foundation Stage, assessment of pupils' progress is on a daily basis. This, together with the Foundation Stage profile, is successful in guiding planning. Since the last inspection, the arrangements for the assessment of pupils' work have

significantly improved and are effectively co-ordinated by the leader of learning programmes. Marking is constructive and encouraging, frequently showing pupils how work can be further developed. The school regularly evaluates its performance in relation to its aim and through a range of standardised tests. The information these tests provide is analysed and any emerging patterns discussed at staff meetings to enable colleagues to plan appropriate tasks to match pupils' needs.

2.34 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 quality of pastoral care, support and guidance given to pupils is outstanding and the staff give close attention to welfare, health and safety. Concerns raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed and the pastoral care arrangements have been strengthened. The school meets its aim by encouraging pupils to work hard, enjoy their learning and achieve their best. The majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said the school provides outstanding pastoral care and that colleagues are a warm and friendly team who put the children first.
- 3.2 The school has a clearly defined, well-documented pastoral network in place to support and guide staff in their pastoral care responsibilities. Class colleagues deal informally with issues on a daily basis, liaising with other colleagues as necessary. Pupils understand they can turn to any adult when they have a problem. The leader of pastoral care and learning meets regularly with the head to ensure effective support and guidance is provided for pupils when it is needed. The weekly staff briefings dedicate time to pupils and when a cause for concern is identified, support for the pupil is planned.
- 3.3 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is a great strength. Pupils mix well and are friendly and considerate towards one another both in class and in the playground. Colleagues treat pupils with respect offering praise and encouragement, and pupils feel valued and are happy. When interviewed, pupils in Year 3 said that they were very happy at school and felt well cared for.
- 3.4 The school's procedures for promoting good discipline and behaviour are clear and effective. The system of rewards and sanctions reinforces positive behaviour. School policies for anti-bullying and harassment are detailed and procedures are known to staff and parents. Pupils understand that unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with immediately.
- 3.5 Child protection procedures are securely in place and are regularly updated to include new requirements as they are introduced. Precise arrangements ensure that Criminal Records Bureau checks are made on all teaching and non-teaching staff who have access to pupils before an appointment is confirmed. The school has two named persons for child protection and training of all staff in child protection is up-to-date. The admissions register is completed appropriately. The attendance registers are completed correctly and arrangements are in place for unexplained absences to be followed-up promptly.
- 3.6 Arrangements to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are appropriate. Proper testing of fire equipment and small electrical appliances is carried out and records kept. Regular fire practices are logged. Staff take appropriate measures to safeguard the health and safety of pupils. Detailed risk assessments are in place for off-site visits and extra-curricular activities. Safety procedures are carefully followed in practical subjects, for example DT, science and PE. The health and safety committee, chaired by a governor, ensures that high standards of care, having regard to statutory obligations, are in place. All health and safety matters and issues requiring attention are dealt with promptly by the facilities manager, who has received appropriate training on carrying out routine maintenance tasks.
- 3.7 The arrangements to care for a pupil who is ill in school are satisfactory. All staff are trained in first aid and training is updated regularly. The school has a written first aid policy and proper records are kept. The food provided for school lunch is healthy and nutritious. Healthy eating is encouraged and its importance discussed in DT, science and with the cook. The kitchen team maintains high standards of health, safety and hygiene and has won awards.

- 3.8 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

- 3.9 The school's links with parents and the community are excellent and have improved since the last inspection. They make a strong contribution to the fulfilment of the school's aim.
- 3.10 In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the education provided and with their children's achievements. They singled out for particular praise the teaching, the curriculum, pastoral care and the worthwhile attitudes the school promotes. A small but significant number of parents said they are not encouraged to be involved in the life and work of the school and that there is a lack of help for pupils with LDD. The inspection team were not able to substantiate these two views.
- 3.11 Parents are given many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. They are made welcome at sports matches, school productions, concerts and curriculum evenings. The school seeks, values and acts on parents' views. Parents with a particular skill or interest are encouraged to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with pupils in lessons and in assembly. Through the Friends of Milbourne (FOM) parents become involved with school life, raising funds for the school and for charity. Its activities foster good relationships between parents and the school.
- 3.12 Parents are kept fully informed through the parents' handbook, school calendar and the weekly newsletter. The website provides a diary of events, reports of educational visits, pupils' successes, and information about the extended day programme. All these well-drafted communications provide insights into the work of the school and the activities taking place. Parents are provided with regular information about their children's work and progress. Parents' meetings take place once a term and reports on pupils' performance, which are sent out annually, are thoughtfully written showing deep understanding of pupils and providing information about their general attitudes, progress and achievements. They do not always, however, suggest what needs to be done to improve. The year group compact disc, issued with the annual report, provides parents with an overview of the life and activities of the school during the last twelve months.
- 3.13 Within a caring community, the school operates an 'open door' policy. Nursery class colleagues meet parents or carers each day before and after school to share information and discuss issues as they arise. Elsewhere in the school, any concerns a parent might have are dealt with promptly and sensitively and all parents are made aware of the complaints procedure. It has not been invoked in the last twelve months.
- 3.14 The school works hard to maintain a strong network of community links. It is actively involved in charitable work, for example pupils collect and donate goods and clothing to a nearby children's resource centre. The school supports national and international disaster emergency appeals. Local residents and neighbours are invited to Open Days. Pupils are invited to sing to residents of nearby care homes and the choir participates in the local music festival. Visits are made to a number of places of interest, including a nearby farm for an archaeological dig. The school supports local environmental issues, such as Safe Routes to School which encourages environmentally-friendly travel to school. It offers holiday sports programmes and the facilities are used by community organisations. All these opportunities make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and promote the school in the community.

- 3.15 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 is exceptionally well governed by a board that is committed to the school's success and continuing development. They ensure the school's aim is met and provide effective oversight and guidance. In this, they are supported by clearly defined structures and management arrangements, including appropriate sub-committees. The quality of governance has been strengthened since the last inspection.
- 4.2 Governors, the majority of whom are new since the last inspection, are aware of their responsibilities including their legal responsibilities in relation to current legislation, including for child protection. They show a strong interest in the quality of education provided. Governors offer a broad spread of experience and expertise and contribute to strategic development through their debate of proposals put forward by the head. Through astute financial planning they ensure the school's accommodation and resources meet children's educational needs.
- 4.3 The head provides governors with high quality educational and management information at their termly meetings, to give them a good insight into the working of the school. Staff make occasional presentations before governors' meetings and once a term each governor spends a day in school focusing on a particular topic and meeting staff informally. These strengthen the partnership between colleagues and governors enabling them to provide support, advice and an appropriate level of challenge. The chair leads with a firm hand and keeps in close touch with the head.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 Strong visionary leadership and outstanding management give clear educational direction and set the tone for the whole school community. This is reflected in the high quality of education provided, the care of pupils and the successful achievement of the school's aim and ethos. The management of the school has been modified sensitively and effectively, and has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- 4.5 The school's development plan demonstrates an effective analysis of the school's needs and the setting of priorities. Self-evaluation is central to all that the school does and everyone participates. Since her appointment, the head has reviewed the running of the school and has been bold in some of the strategies she has put in place. She empowers those with vision by giving them responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. This enables team leaders to take full responsibility for their areas, whilst feeling valued for what they achieve. The leadership team possess complementary skills, and provide valuable support for the head and for staff. Their decision making is collegiate, consultative and firm. A rather complex, but effective, team structure allows for full communication and consultation. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators is developing well. They work closely together to ensure continuity and progression in all areas of the curriculum.
- 4.6 The work of the school is underpinned by a full range of new or revised policies and procedures which are effectively carried through in practice.

- 4.7 The recruitment of well-qualified staff is properly managed and in line with current obligations. Appropriate records are kept. Since the last inspection a professional review and development system has been introduced for teaching and non-teaching staff. Through it, staff professional development needs are identified and these guide school-based and external in-service training. It has been introduced in an atmosphere which has led to the sharing of ideas and good practice in the classroom. All staff work hard and are conscientious. They are committed to ensuring pupils achieve as well as they should and that they enjoy their time at school. Levels of staffing are good with a colleague and associate colleague in every class. Staffing for pupils under five meets current guidelines.
- 4.8 Financial resources are shrewdly managed to ensure good provision is made for learning materials to support the school's educational aims and the needs of pupils. The provision has improved since the last inspection. The school makes imaginative use of the site, notably for the outdoor curriculum. Classrooms are mostly of a good size, but in some the space is restricted. The swimming pool and the sports field are utilised to the full for both educational and recreational play. A rolling programme ensures the buildings and grounds are maintained to a high standard. The school is a pleasant and welcoming place and provides a secure environment for pupils. Year 1 pupils said they feel safe in school.
- 4.9 Routine administration and day-to-day management are efficient. The welcoming and helpful response of the school office team, and their additional role in the development of the school, are important in supporting its ethos.
- 4.10 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 is successful in meeting its aim and the needs of pupils. It has many strong features and is outstanding in several important areas. The school provides an excellent broad educational experience in which pupils achieve high standards. Such achievement is largely due to high quality teaching and efficient systems to support pupils in their learning. Pastoral care is outstanding. Pupils mostly behave well and good provision is made for their personal development. The Nursery provides an excellent introduction to school life. The school effectively brings together pupils from a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds. Parents said they are pleased with the education provided and emphasised the friendliness of the school community. The head is well supported by others in the leadership team and together they are successfully moving the school forward. Through its own monitoring, the school recognises it has no systematic approach to its provision for PSHCE.
- 5.2 Substantial progress has been made in all areas identified for development at the time of the last inspection. The school has made wide-ranging improvements in the curriculum, pastoral care, teaching, management, the provision of resources, including ICT, and to the accommodation. The last Ofsted nursery inspection in October 2004, identified no significant weaknesses, but the school has addressed the suggested area for improvement by providing more opportunities for children to become aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 In order to improve still further, it should:
1. give priority to preparing, implementing and monitoring a scheme of work for PSHCE throughout the school.
- 5.5 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 11th to 14th June 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff, with parents 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 to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Margaret Banks	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Catherine Nathan	Deputy Headmistress, IAPS school
Mrs Gail Purt	Former Headmistress, GSA school
Mrs Sara Wiggins	Former Headmistress, GSA junior department