



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ABBEY GATE COLLEGE**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Abbey Gate College

Full Name of College	<b>Abbey Gate College</b>
DCSF Number	<b>896/6018</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>273586</b>
Address	<b>Abbey Gate College Saighton Grange Saighton Chester Cheshire CH3 6EN</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01244 332077</b>
Fax Number	<b>01244 335510</b>
Email Address	<b>headmistress@abbeygatecollege.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs L M Horner</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs M Heywood</b>
Age Range	<b>4 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>482</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (275 boys; 207 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 0      5-11: 103 3-5 (EYFS): 14      11-18: 365</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>482</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Rebecca Walker</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection date/EYFS	<b>08 Feb 2010 to 09 Feb 2010</b>
Final (team) visit	<b>08 Mar 2010 to 10 Mar 2010</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 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 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. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Abbey Gate College is an independent co-educational day college for students aged four to eighteen years. It is located some three miles south of the City of Chester. The college was established in 1977 and is located on two sites. The junior site, for students aged four to eleven years, is at Aldford School, some two miles from the main school at Saighton Grange. This was established in 1996 and added the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in 2000. The same board of governors administers the provisions at both sites. Saighton Grange accommodates students aged eleven to eighteen and they are mostly of white European origin. Most students come from professional and business families living within the local area. The college was inspected last in March 2004.
- 1.2 Currently there are 275 boys and 207 girls on roll. There are 14 children in the EYFS. Two students use English as an additional language, though neither of these receives specific support. No pupil has a statement of special educational need though 38 students in the main college are identified as having learning difficulties, and who receive support. Although selective in its intake the college accepts students with a range of attainment. Broadly the attainment of students is above average.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the college governors have appointed a new headmistress. The college has also improved its facilities through the addition of an arts and media centre, a design and technology workshop and a science laboratory, and has added an atrium and mezzanine floor creating an additional learning support room at the Aldford site. Accommodation for sixth form students has also been upgraded.
- 1.4 The college aims are to provide educational excellence across a broad range of subjects in which students of all abilities are enabled to meet their full potential, to encourage students to excel in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music, drama and sport, and to build on the prevailing culture of good manners and self-discipline within a caring environment, which treats each pupil as an individual.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

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

- 2.1 The college fully meets its aim to encourage students to achieve their personal ambitions in an atmosphere that is caring but challenging. Students achieve well and make good or better progress in their learning because of the very wide range of curricular and other activities both within and away from the college. Teachers have a good awareness of the attainment of pupils and take this fully into account in their teaching – the support of the learning needs staff is especially helpful in this regard. The standards achieved by students are above average and the college successfully accomplishes its broad and ambitious aim to ensure that all students attain their academic and personal potential. Students' achievements are aided by their excellent attitudes to their work and the exemplary behaviour they show both within lessons and around the college.
- 2.2 The students' personal qualities are outstanding and fully supported within the college by the positive family-type ambience as well as the arrangements for their welfare, health and safety. The community awareness within the college is outstanding; relationships between staff and students and students themselves are outstanding and conducive to excellent behaviour. This community awareness is fostered through provision such as the school council and the many clubs and societies that operate within the college. Younger students enjoy coming to the senior college and are made to feel a part of the wider family. Students develop an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They are tolerant of each other's differences and successfully place moral issues into real contexts; they can successfully provide reasons to justify their opinions and decisions. Teachers in the primary phase are very successful in providing for the full range of learning and personal development of their students. Students show a good awareness of those less fortunate than themselves; they have active fund-raising initiatives for various national and international charities, and the levels of student participation and leadership in this area are impressive.
- 2.3 The active involvement of an outstanding governing body in the work and life of the college ensures that the aims of the whole college are fulfilled. Together, the governors provide their experience and considerable expertise to ensure that the college takes advantage of every possible opportunity to foster the academic and personal progress of each student. In addition to their own monitoring activities they add to their knowledge of the college by receiving reports from the leaders of both the junior and senior schools. The governors have responded fully to the recommendations of the previous report. The quality of leadership is excellent, and brings about a greater effectiveness of management at all levels to support the personal and academic development of each student. Even so, the school management recognises some shortcomings within its programme for teacher appraisal. The college maintains outstanding links with parents. The parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated a high degree of satisfaction with what the college does for their children. Parents of the children and pupils at the junior school are particularly fulsome in their praise.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.
- 2.5 The school's provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and no action was required.

### **(ii) Recommended action**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
  - 1. Devise and expedite the implementation of a revised scheme for appraisal in order to further raise the quality of teaching and learning.
  - 2. Ensure that ICT is exploited more widely to further benefit students' learning.

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

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

- 3.1 Standards are above average. The college successfully fulfils its ambitious aim to ensure that all students achieve their academic and personal potential. Results at GCSE and A level are above average in comparison with those in maintained secondary schools. Students make good or better progress in relation to their ability. There are no significant differences in the progress made by students of different abilities.
- 3.2 In lessons and in their written work, students indicate good knowledge and understanding. They are articulate and able to express themselves in both oral and written form. In Years 7 to 9, for example, the reading skills of students are effectively promoted. In design and technology, students produce a wide range of artefacts that demonstrate their growing skill and confidence in the use of, at times, quite obdurate materials. Throughout the college students work well at individual tasks as well as in group settings. They are eager to question their teachers and this shows their confidence as learners. Throughout the college students' attitudes to their learning are good.
- 3.3 Where students are able to use the much improved facilities for information and communication technology (ICT), they show how well they can employ this to support their studies. However, in general, the use of the technology is under-developed in encouraging students to undertake personal research. Students have a good grasp of mathematics, with some of those of high attainment taking part in the United Kingdom Mathematics Challenge. Numeracy skills are developed well and students show that they are able to use these across the range of other learning.
- 3.4 The college is notable for its many individual and team successes in a very wide range of sports and activities. Individual students have gone on to international success, while some who are still at the college represent national sporting associations. For example, some students in the junior school are members of the national ski team. Other students represent the national squads in swimming, sailing and water polo. Significant successes have also been achieved in equestrian events.

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

- 3.5 The curriculum is excellent and meets the aim of enabling the students to achieve high standards across a wide range of subjects and challenging activities. The curriculum is appropriate for students of all abilities and needs, and covers a suitable range of areas of learning including personal, social and health education (PSHE); it fully supports the aims of the school. The range and depth of the curriculum encourages and enables all students to excel in their personal ambitions. The subjects are timetabled effectively to allow students maximum benefit from the wide range of subjects. The curriculum is planned well throughout the college and for all ages. This enables and encourages students to make good or better progress as they move upwards in the college. Each subject is planned effectively and this ensures progression in learning for each student. Where a student may have a learning difficulty they are effectively supported through the activities of the learning support department. This department provides sound advice to teachers about how the students could learn more effectively and this enables teachers to make better provision for these students within their lessons.
- 3.6 The extra-curricular programme is extensive and of high quality. The boundaries between the extra-curricular provision and the curriculum itself are blurred at times and often mutually supportive. This results in students continuing to push the limits of their personal qualities and skills. In music for example, the chapel choir has a deserved national reputation. It undertakes frequent international tours and has sung in places such as Venice and the cathedrals of Ely, Wells and Chester. The contribution of music and drama to the life of the college and the development of its students is outstanding.
- 3.7 The curriculum is supported and enhanced by a very wide range of visits that supports the students' learning. Adventure training activities take place regularly, and purposeful field work opportunities support learning in history, geography and biology. The considerable effort of staff enables the college to provide as wide a range of support activities as could reasonably be possible.

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

- 3.8 The quality of the teaching is good; some is outstanding. This effectively supports the aims of the college and promotes the good and better progress that students make. Since the previous inspection, an appraisal scheme for teachers has had a positive effect on the quality of the teaching, though the effectiveness of this scheme is now under further review. Most teaching is stimulating and effective; this enables students of all attainments to make good progress, in line with the aims of the college. Many teachers use their considerable expertise to pose succinct questions that challenge the understanding of students and enable them to push the boundaries of their knowledge. In the best lessons the responses given by students are used as the starting point for the further development of this knowledge and understanding. This method is particularly effective for students of higher attainment, whose questions and discussion clearly indicated they were enjoying the challenge. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject and use this expertise to draw on information that is beyond what the students would be expected to know and in so doing raise the quality of their learning. Students respond enthusiastically to lessons that have a lively pace; in music, for example, students achieve high standards because the pace generates their enthusiasm for learning. One student suggested that a knighthood may be appropriate for a teacher for the quality of work that he achieved from his students.
- 3.9 In a few lessons teachers have an over-reliance on a didactic style of teaching, and the outcomes of these are less effective. Resources are used unimaginatively in these lessons and excessively long explanations are provided that 'switch off' the students' attention. In these lessons the sparks of learning are dimmed in the students' eyes. Teachers are informed well by their colleagues in the learning support department. The provision for this has improved since the last inspection and teachers throughout the college now receive well-evidenced reports about any student with a specific learning difficulty. These reports helpfully include practical suggestions on how other colleagues can provide for the learning of these students. The feedback from some teachers, received by the learning support department, is presently unfocused and does not provide sufficient objective evidence to indicate the improvements that students make. The learning support staff are aware of this and have firm plans to remedy the situation.
- 3.10 Classrooms and subjects are generally well resourced. The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection. Where interactive whiteboards are skilfully used within lessons, for example in a Year 6 English lesson, these capture the students' interest and assist in maintaining their concentration. Broadly, however, the use of ICT to support learning throughout the college is under-developed, especially to support individual skills of research.
- 3.11 The information gained from assessment is generally used well to plan the next stages of learning, although there are inconsistencies. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that all students have learnt what they have taught through searching questions or simple tests. Marking of the students' work is adequate overall but inconsistent in its quality. There is variation between some subjects and individual teachers. Some outstanding examples, from individual teachers, indicate clearly to students what they need to do in order to improve their work; comments about it are informative and incisive. Assessment data is compiled well and this enables senior management to monitor the standards that prevail.

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

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

- 4.1 Students of all ages, including those in the EYFS, develop outstanding personal qualities. They develop a maturity and confidence that is appropriate to their age. It is a central aim of the college to provide an all round education that results in students becoming confident, articulate and mature individuals who are prepared well to meet the challenges they face when they leave the college. In this the college is outstandingly successful.
- 4.2 Students develop excellent self-esteem and self-confidence through the extensive range of opportunities provided by the college within and outside the curriculum. They explore their world through sporting, creative and intellectual activities that promote self-awareness and a strong sense of responsibility for others. In the drama production, for example, all the students displayed an excellent empathy with the soldiers of the First World War, to an extent that it raised the quality of their performances. The spiritual life of the college is enhanced by the close relationship that exists with Chester Cathedral, specifically through the choir and also through the mutual support of both institutions. The college environment is well respected and plays a fundamental part in the promotion of appreciation and wonder of the natural world among the students.
- 4.3 Students develop an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They successfully place moral issues into real contexts and develop the skills to reason and justify their opinions and decisions. In this they are supported by good programmes of PSHE that are taught with confidence and skill. The students' behaviour is excellent and they show a natural willingness to assume responsibility for the care and supervision of their peers and juniors; this is exercised with fairness and concern. Significant misdemeanours are rare. The college's approach to discipline and pastoral care reflects its aims and ethos. The students respond by showing loyalty to the college and exemplary concern for their peers.
- 4.4 Students develop an excellent understanding of their own place within society. Again this is supported well by the PSHE programme. The emphasis at the college on charitable fund-raising is a strength, and levels of student participation and leadership in this area are impressive. The college's emphasis on team-building and leadership development among students is excellent and has a significant impact in helping students to develop their skills effectively across the range of college activities. The house system is both popular and successful in engendering the students' commitment along with providing many opportunities for their personal development. The recent introduction of the student council has enabled students to have a voice in the running of the college.
- 4.5 Students develop excellent appreciation of the cultural life within the college community. They make full use of the extensive range of activities, including trips overseas and closer to home, along with activities in music, sports and drama. This develops in students a curiosity about the wider world and gives them a tolerant attitude to those from other cultures. Within some subjects, such as geography, history and art, the students use opportunities to gain an appreciation of culture and issues beyond the college. Generally, however, the provision for enabling students to gain a first-hand multi-cultural understanding is under-developed.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are excellent overall and fully support the aims of the school. Staff are skilled, knowledgeable and committed to the welfare of each and every student in their care. Teachers know their students extremely well and deal with them in a caring and relaxed manner. This ensures that students receive appropriate support and guidance and the whole contributes significantly to the family atmosphere throughout the college.
- 4.7 The quality of relationships between staff and students and amongst students is excellent. This is evident in lessons and around the college. Students of all ages feel that they can turn to adults for assistance and support, and feel that teachers are genuinely concerned with their well-being. Students treat each other well and respectfully, and are friendly and courteous towards staff and visitors. Positive and supportive relationships were observed during a Year 7 football practice led by a sixth form student. Students in Year 6, who act as play leaders, show levels of concern for younger children that belie their own young age.
- 4.8 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, including procedures to guard against bullying, are comprehensive. Parents and students say that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. When asked directly about issues of bullying a majority of students did not recognise it as a feature overtly present in the college. Students have a good knowledge of the rewards and sanctions in place and regard the discipline system as fair. Students value their acquisition of house points, which, together with the high expectations of staff, encourages good behaviour.
- 4.9 The college provides outstanding pastoral care to its students. The college has robust and effective policies for the protection and care of the students and these are implemented rigorously. These policies are practised with consistency, a strong sense of fairness and a demonstrable concern for the interests of the child. Safeguarding measures are appropriate and staff receive suitable training in child protection issues. Management of the pastoral care in the college is excellent. The recent appointments of pastoral heads of section in the college have done much to enhance provision in this area and to reinforce the ethos and focus of the college.
- 4.10 Procedures for staff recruitment are robust, and meet requirements; all staff receive appropriate training in child protection. The college has a suitable plan for improving accessibility to the site.
- 4.11 All students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle, whether this is through the curriculum or by being enabled to take part in vigorous and regular exercise. The students' knowledge of what constitutes healthy food is sound. Responses by students within the questionnaire returns indicate that the majority enjoy being at the college. They feel safe and appreciate what the staff do on their behalf. A comment by one young student in Year 5 encapsulated the views of many when he said 'Our school is friendly and the teachers help you a lot'.

- 4.12 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Fire evacuation practices take place every term and are properly recorded. Risk assessments are thorough. The maintenance staff respond very quickly to ameliorate any potential hazard. The college has appropriate measures in place to increase the accessibility of the buildings for those with physical disabilities. Heads of department are responsible for safety in their areas and they too complete formal risk assessments. The health and safety committee meets regularly and the college has due regard for all the relevant health and safety regulations.
- 4.13 Suitably qualified first-aiders are at hand throughout the college. The names and locations of these are clearly posted around the college. Suitable facilities and staff are in place to support pupils who are injured or taken ill. Admissions and attendance registers are kept correctly, and any unexplained absences are followed up immediately it is known that a student has not arrived at college.

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

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

- 5.1 The governors make an outstanding contribution to the running of the college. The support and expertise they offer assists the college to provide a first class education for all the children and students. The impact of their involvement is that each student is encouraged to grow to the full in their personal and academic development. Most students make at least good progress and for many this progress is outstanding. The governing body is highly effective in providing a well-articulated direction for the college that is fully understood by all staff. The staff are voluble in their appreciation of the support given by the governing body.
- 5.2 The governors know the college well and have an excellent understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They achieve this through work undertaken in the committees for education, finance and estates. These committees meet regularly with the heads of different sections of the college and prepare full reports for consideration by the main governing body.
- 5.3 Governors show their commitment to the college by taking time out of their own busy schedules to make frequent visits. For example, in order to enhance his understanding of the workings of the college one governor shadowed a Year 8 student in order to gain an understanding of the working day. Many other visits are informal. The chair of governors is particularly active in this role. The chair and other governors have had appropriate training in safeguarding procedures; one governor is an acknowledged expert in health and safety and this enables the college to be secure in its procedures. The welfare of students is closely monitored by governors and parents confirm they are happy with the attention given to this by the governors. Health and safety matters are also given close consideration by governors and where issues may arise these are speedily remedied.
- 5.4 The governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and take a close interest in development planning; from this they have constructed ambitious but realistic targets for the further development of the college. Since the previous inspection the governing body has responded effectively to the recommendations made within that report and through their prudence and effort the college is well placed to face the future.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership in the college is excellent and this is providing improved effectiveness in all areas of college activity. This is in accordance with the aims of the college. The success of the leadership and management is reflected in the improving academic achievements of the students as well as the quality of their personal development. The leadership ensures that staff are clear about their roles and the contribution they can make to the life and standards within the college.
- 5.6 The college management has set clear and achievable priorities for its development and it has the expertise to see that these come to fruition. Lesson observations by senior staff within departments have been undertaken for some time but the arrangements are now being revised and widened in order to have a greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Since the previous inspection the senior management team has appointed subject coordinators for the primary age phase. This too is beginning to have a positive impact on the organisation of the curriculum for those students.
- 5.7 Professional development for teachers takes place within the college for up to four in-service training days. These generally respond to whole-college issues, but the change in emphasis by the college leadership team ensures that staff now have greater access to courses that are provided externally and which encompass both academic and extra-curricular demands. Arrangements for the training of staff in matters of safeguarding, as well as health and safety, are secure and well established.
- 5.8 The college leadership selects high quality staff to join an already strong and effective teaching team. All appointed staff are subject to the appropriate and rigorous checking procedures. The central register of these appointments is maintained efficiently and this meets all the regulatory requirements.

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

- 5.9 The college's links with parents are outstanding. The constructive relationships that ensue are fully in keeping with the aims of the college. The responses by parents within the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that a significant majority are pleased with what the college achieves on behalf of their children. Parents particularly like the pastoral care of their children; those parents of younger children are particularly appreciative of this. A significant number of parents also become involved in college social events and attend events such as drama productions and music presentations.
- 5.10 Parents receive clear and informative reports about their children's work and the progress they make. The frequency of these reports, along with the opportunities to meet with college staff vary according to the age phase of the students. In all cases the reports are thorough. Parental concerns are responded to positively and sensitively by the college. An effective complaints procedure is in place.

**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 is good, with some outstanding features, and as a result the needs of all children are met well. Strong links with parents ensure that children make a smooth transfer, settle in quickly and make good progress. Systems for self-evaluation are developing well; the leaders have clear plans for improvement, indicating a positive outlook for continual development.

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

6.2 Good leadership and management result in the children's learning and welfare needs being met well. The setting has made considerable progress since the last inspection. Safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively. Diversity and inclusion are a priority within the provision. Effective links with other providers contribute well to the children's good learning and development. Children benefit from the opportunities provided to mix with older children. They also benefit from being taught music and French by a specialist. Good arrangements are in place for the professional development of staff. The setting is particularly effective in promoting the children's literacy and numeracy skills through story times and through focused sessions and the use of computer-presented activities. The setting engages well with parents; information from the children's individual profiles is passed on to parents and those with responsibility for the next stage of the children's learning. The leaders are developing suitable systems of self-evaluation and have a clear vision for the future development of the provision.

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

6.3 Provision for learning and development in the EYFS is good, and promotion of children's welfare is given high priority. The setting provides interesting and varied learning opportunities for children. Information for assessment is used well to inform planning. Next steps in learning, however, are not yet set for individuals. Children benefit from the good outdoor play facilities, and the good variety of trips off site. Visits include those to the ancient village church, a local salt museum and the theatre in Chester. These experiences help them to learn about their own faith and culture. Fewer opportunities exist for them to learn about other faiths and cultures. Good provision is made for children with additional needs; they integrate fully and make good progress. Transitional arrangements are good and children are well prepared to transfer into the college setting.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes of the EYFS are good. Children are happy, confident individuals who feel safe and well cared for. They communicate their views confidently and show good levels of concentration by listening to adults. Many demonstrate good early writing, number and ICT skills; some write their names and the names of family members and some are able write short, well-constructed structures. Counting skills are reinforced through singing nursery rhymes, action songs and by using computer presented activities. Children regularly use the outdoor climbing facilities safely to develop their physical skills as well as coordination and social skills. Their social skills are enhanced when they join with older pupils for playtime and assemblies. Children participate in the community and sing at the local church Christmas service for senior citizens. Children play imaginatively when they dress up as fire officers or airport check-in attendants. They develop creative skills by exploring different materials. The children's spiritual awareness is developing well by looking at seasonal changes and the growth of plants and flowers they have planted. Their moral development is demonstrated in their good behaviour and through sharing and taking turns. Children eat healthy snacks and know the importance of washing their hands at important times during the day. Their economic well-being is assured as they are developing a good foundation in preparation for transfer to formal schooling.

**What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, representative 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 students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Tom Fisher-Smith	Reporting Inspector
Mr Tony Woolstone	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr Jonathan Meadmore	Junior Team Inspector (Former Head IAPS)
Mrs Jane Disley	Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS)
Mr Mark Heywood	Senior Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC)
Mrs Dawn Moore	Senior Team Inspector (Head, ISA)
Mr Robert Dillow	Senior Team Inspector (Principal HMC)
Ms Sheila Boyle	Early Years Lead Inspector