

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Edge Grove School

Full Name of the School	<b>Edge Grove School</b>
DCSF Number	<b>919/6002</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>311054</b>
Address	<b>Aldenham Village, Hertfordshire WD25 8NL.</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01923 855724</b>
Fax Number	<b>01923 859920</b>
Email Address	<b>headmaster@edgegrove.com</b>
Head	<b>Mr Michael Davies</b>
Proprietor	<b>Mr Nicholas Shryane</b>
Age Range (of the whole school)	<b>3 to 13</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009</b>
Head of Early Years Setting	<b>Mrs Gill Emmerson</b>
Early Years Age Range	<b>3 to 5</b>
Early Years Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	<b>16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009</b>

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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 Edge Grove School is a selective, co-educational preparatory school for pupils aged from three to thirteen years. The school aims to provide a broad educational experience for all its pupils preparing them for a successful, happy and healthy future, inculcating a love of learning and a commitment to the higher goals of community and a sustainable environment. The school's key values are decency and mutual respect in all relationships, inclusiveness and excellence. The school is proud of its tradition of spirituality, both within its traditional heritage as a Church of England school and in recognition of the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of members of the school community.
- 1.2 Edge Grove was founded in 1935 on the present site as a boarding preparatory school for boys. In 1969 the school became a charitable non-profit-making educational trust, under the guidance of a board of governors. The school welcomed girls for the first time in 1999. The twenty-nine acres of grounds include ten acres of playing fields, in addition to formal gardens, spinneys and a lake which is a bird sanctuary. Accommodation in and around the original house includes classrooms, labs, a sports hall, two hard tennis courts, a heated swimming pool, a roller blading area and two croquet lawns. Hart House, the pre-preparatory department, occupies new buildings which were opened in 2007. Current developments include the recently completed improvements to the catering facilities and to girls' changing rooms. Work is underway on new netball and tennis courts. The new head joined the school in January 2009
- 1.3 There are 335 full time pupils on the roll at the school, 226 boys and 109 girls. The school is organised into four departments. Hart House (the Pre-Prep) has a total of 119 pupils; of these 33 full-time and 18 part-time pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for pupils aged 3 to 5, and 68 are in Years 1 and 2. The Junior School has 82 pupils in Years 3 and 4, the Middle School has 77 pupils in Years 5 and 6 and the Senior School has 75 pupils in Years 7 and 8. There are three forms in most years.
- 1.4 Pupils may be registered for entry into Hart House from the age of three or four. The entry process at this age involves an informal assessment and parental interview. Occasional vacancies occur for pupils to enter higher up Hart House following an interview and entry test, and possibly a report from the previous school. Entrance to the Junior School is at age seven. All pupils attend an assessment morning including tests in mathematics, English and a piece of free writing; Edge Grove also asks the child's previous school for a progress report. The majority of pupils move through the school, leaving at the age of thirteen. Standardised tests used on entry over the last three years show that pupils are of well above average ability compared to the national average. Pupils come mainly from professional or business backgrounds and from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Boarders form an international community, travelling to the school from many parts of the world. Day pupils live relatively close to the school, usually a short car ride away.
- 1.5 Currently 50 pupils have been assessed as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and of these 32 receive specialist learning support from the school. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) funded by the parents. Seven pupils have English as their second language (EAL) and of these six receive support for their English.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

1.7 See Section 7 for the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 Edge Grove School provides a good educational experience for its pupils, consistent with its aim to provide a broad educational experience that prepares pupils for a successful, happy and healthy future. The standards noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. Pupils are clearly happy, well motivated and enjoy their educational experiences whether as day pupils or boarders.
- 2.2 The broad curriculum enables pupils to progress well in their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and creative development. The child-initiated learning in EYFS is being extended into Years 1 and 2, enabling more variation in the Pre-Prep curriculum. Literacy is well taught through a new phonics scheme. Standards of numeracy are good. The balance of the timetable and the structure of the day for Years 3 to 8 have been recently reviewed and revised. A longer morning break now gives time for many extra-curricular activities to be offered, the rest period after lunch is used for private reading and the daily afternoon sports period gives excellent opportunities. These changes add greatly to the breadth and balance of the curriculum. The academic curriculum in Years 6 to 8 ensures that pupils experience a full range of subjects as well as extending the scholarship candidates. Many pupils have opportunities to take part in competitions both within school and nationally; the Middle School Poetry Competition, National Primary Maths Challenge and university master classes in the holidays all provide opportunities to tackle demanding and challenging work.
- 2.3 Pupils benefit from opportunities to study languages, including Latin, within the curriculum, and Spanish and Greek as extra-curricular activities. French is introduced in Reception and extends through the school with activities appropriate to the age group, for example pupils sing in French in Year 1 and greet each other in Year 2. Years 3 to 8 greatly enjoy the annual visit of a European theatre group in the summer term to perform a French Play. There is a regular visit to France by Year 8 and, in addition, pupils from Years 6, 7, and 8 are encouraged to take part in an annual French exchange.
- 2.4 The programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) fully supports the aims and ethos of the school. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss important issues. In addition to PSHE lessons, circle time, tutorials, assemblies and religious education (RE) provide valuable opportunities for pupils of all ages to openly discuss issues which are important to them.
- 2.5 The school encourages all pupils to take part in a wide variety of activities, many are involved in drama, art, and sport, both in the curriculum and in the excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Some pupils who have individual music lessons also participate in ensembles. All pupils take part in the annual drama productions in each year group. A recent play involved all the pupils in Year 7, who had written, produced and presented their own script, which included a lot of 'rap' poetry. The development of physical skills has a high priority and pupils enjoy sport at all levels. Pupils from Year 3 through to Year 8 represent the school in matches and tournaments in a wide variety of sports. The wide range of activities for all ages ranges from chess, Cub Scouts and Beavers, and construction club to archery, art for all and gardening.
- 2.6 Preparation for the next stage of education is thorough with work carefully matched to a pupil's next school. Pupils are well prepared for moving on. The curriculum as a whole is well planned and inclusive for pupils of all ages.

- 2.7 The school has an effective procedure for the identification of pupils with LDD. Careful assessment takes place and when necessary pupils receive appropriate support from specialist teachers. Excellent liaison occurs between the learning support department, class teachers and parents. Individual programmes are devised for the pupils with LDD, SEN and those who need EAL support. These inform class teachers about pupils' specific needs and appropriate strategies, and enable them to tackle the curriculum with confidence. Weekly year group meetings monitor individual pupils' progress.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.9 Pupils' learning is good overall. Pupils enjoy their learning and are proud of their achievements. The quality of learning fulfils the school's aims to provide a broad education and to encourage a love of learning and standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 2.10 The pupils demonstrate good levels of skills in all areas of learning. Standards in literacy for younger pupils are now outstanding, having improved greatly with the introduction of a new phonics scheme three years ago. In the EYFS pupils make rapid progress through the well-structured and consistent approach to reading and writing. Standards in numeracy are good. Pupils use logical and independent thinking and, from an early age, they think out answers for themselves. For example, pupils in Year 2 had conducted a research project on a migratory bird as part of their study of migration; each pupil made a presentation to their peers and then produced a passport for their bird. An excellent wall display shows the results of their research. Pupils of all ages, including EYFS, now have strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills, an important improvement since the last inspection. This has been made possible by the significant development of ICT facilities allowing work across the curriculum to take place. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils used graphics software to create a model village. Year 5 pupils used databases, searches and a desktop publishing programme. Year 6 pupils created presentations out of their research. Pupils also used video and digital cameras and programmable floor robots. Older pupils' art work used ICT extensively and to great effect.
- 2.11 There are no significant differences in attainment between different groups of pupils, in different subjects or in different curricular areas. In most lessons, pupils of differing abilities progressed equally well, although occasionally tasks of appropriate difficulty had not been prepared to allow all to achieve their potential. In some lessons, pupils made rapid progress in response to challenging and exciting tasks and the infectious enthusiasm of their teachers. In a Year 6 art lesson pupils worked with great concentration and skill at a demanding drawing task, and evaluated both their own and others' work very accurately. Pupils are proud of their creative writing and talked of their enjoyment in this work.
- 2.12 Pupils do well in Common Entrance exams and the 11+ exams. In the last three years the vast majority of pupils have achieved the required Common Entrance score to enter their first choice school, and each year a number of pupils are awarded scholarships to their senior schools. These scholarships include academic, art, music, sporting and scholarships for all-round achievement to highly selective senior schools.
- 2.13 In recent years, pupils have achieved many sporting successes both individually and as team members in a wide variety of sports, including football, hockey and cricket, the latter up to national level. Individual successes were achieved in athletics, archery and tennis. Pupils achieve well in music examinations and perform regularly in concerts and competitions in

school. Displays show the outstanding achievements of many pupils in art; a spectacular graffiti in the art block is a stimulating feature of the area.

- 2.14 Pupils learn to take notes efficiently, and organise their work themselves. The newly introduced pupil contact book enables pupils to take responsibility for their own organisation. Throughout the school, pupils develop into independent and responsible learners.
- 2.15 Pupils study well and work together effectively in pairs and small groups. In a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils worked harmoniously together, adopting different roles in the discussions of maps and aerial photographs. They asked each other challenging questions using highly technical language, whilst listening carefully to others and ensuring that careful notes were made. In an art lesson, pupils evaluated each other's work with sensitivity and gave encouragement and praise spontaneously.
- 2.16 Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils settle quickly and apply themselves to their work. Pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment, together with the culture of praise and support from both teachers and peers, means they persevere in tasks that they find demanding or difficult, taking great pride in their achievement. In discussion, pupils said how much they enjoy their lessons and activities; they felt sure that they would succeed because they could always ask a teacher for help if they found themselves in difficulties.

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

- 2.17 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, meeting the aims of the school. There has been significant improvement in this area since the last inspection. The school is successfully creating a community which celebrates diversity. Pupils form strong relationships and develop empathy. They have a sense of belonging; a strong culture of charitable giving and an awareness of different cultural backgrounds. Pupils express a strong sense of moral values.
- 2.18 Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils develop considerable self-confidence and self-esteem and they are aware of their own spirituality. Spiritual curiosity was observed in a RE lesson when pupils explored their own sense of self in light of discussions arising from a biblical story. Year 7 pupils suggested that a school prayer book should be established and this has been supported and encouraged by staff. In an English lesson about the quality of instructions, pupils' delight in learning was seen when they gasped with amazement when an experiment worked. Chapel services give an opportunity for further reflection on themes discussed in assembly.
- 2.19 Pupils' moral development is also outstanding. Especially in older years, pupils explore areas of moral debate such as stem cell research and other ethical issues. They speak in support of discipline at school and feel that it is fairly applied when individuals misbehave. The importance of preserving natural resources and protecting the environment is well understood through the work of the environment committee and has been recognised by a bronze eco-schools award. This awareness is seen throughout the curriculum; for example, last year there was a rainforest theme linked in with a combined music and drama day.
- 2.20 Pupils' social development is outstanding. The school council, chaired by a member of staff who is elected by the pupils, is highly regarded by pupils and staff alike. House captains and vice captains apply in writing and are interviewed for their positions; they value their roles and are respected by the rest of the community. Both girls and boys in the Middle and Junior Schools have the opportunity to join Cub Scouts, which develops a wide range of skills as well as giving leadership opportunities to Year 6 pupils. Year 2 pupils take part in Beavers. Knowledge of the institutions and services in Britain is fostered in many ways. Hart House



pupils enjoy regular visits by the fire service. Parents in the armed forces take part in Remembrance Day services. Older pupils have visits from local magistrates who stage mock trials, and the scholarship group has visited parliament. There is a good deal of charitable fundraising, including preparing gifts for the Samaritans' Christmas boxes for children, fundraising events such as the school talent show called 'Edge Factor', the Cub Scouts' charity cake sales and ongoing support for a wide range of good causes.

- 2.21 Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. In EYFS, children's home cultures are celebrated and circle time is used well to promote positive attitudes to differences. Pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds live and work together harmoniously; all feel that they are well catered-for and that their differences are respected. The well-researched work of Year 7 pupils exploring Judaism, including a recipe for a cake they had made, was displayed prominently in the Jubilee Building. Pupils of African origin participated confidently in a discussion regarding the slave trade and a Muslim pupil took part enthusiastically in the analysis of an Old Testament text. Pupils in Junior Choir are rehearsing a song about multi-racial friendship. The school is a successful and harmonious multi-cultural society.
- 2.22 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

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

- 2.23 The quality of teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion that is excellent. Teaching is successfully working to fulfil the aims of the school, both in providing a broad experience and in inculcating a love of learning. Many pupils spoke very positively about the teaching they receive and their enjoyment was evident in their enthusiastic responses and participation in many lessons. The use of all aspects of assessment has improved significantly since the last inspection. In EYFS an excellent system of assessment is based on the practice of recording the individual 'learning journey' of each pupil.
- 2.24 Teaching at Edge Grove enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress. The needs of pupils with LDD and SEN are carefully identified, individual educational plans and learning programmes are prepared, and all teaching staff are informed of the appropriate strategies to help these pupils succeed. Pupils with EAL receive appropriate support to enable them to make progress.
- 2.25 Teaching successfully develops intellectual effort and pupils show excellent physical and creative development. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm and excitement about their learning and work with interest in class. In many lessons, pupils are encouraged to think and learn for themselves. Teachers frequently respond to pupils' questions by asking the class to think about the question and suggest answers, and teachers also make good use of open-ended questions. Many tasks are planned in which pupils have to think for themselves or work out answers with a partner or in a group. Since the last inspection, the library and additional ICT suite have been redeveloped. These are now useful resources to enable independent learning and they support teachers well. Pupils from Hart House frequently use the ICT suite and one group of Year 2 pupils was seen navigating a programme to discover facts about the habitats, diet and size of their favourite animals.

- 2.26 Pupils behave responsibly, inspired by the high expectations and good role models provided by their teachers. Very positive relationships have been built up between teachers and their pupils. Pupils' enjoyment of learning was seen in their eager responses to questions, care in presentation and preparation of work and the evident pride pupils of all ages showed in discussing their work and achievements.
- 2.27 The best teaching was characterised by excellent planning which ensured the use of varied teaching methods, including open-ended and challenging tasks which challenged the most able. Carefully prepared tasks for pupils of different abilities, together with the good use of learning support staff, resulted in pupils with learning difficulties making good progress. Good management of time ensured that work was completed in the time available. In a small proportion of lessons, planning did not include tasks structured to enable less able pupils to learn well, for example, where one task was set for all pupils some pupils failed to complete their work, thus limiting their learning.
- 2.28 Comprehensive information is now available to all teachers to inform their planning, with the result that teaching generally shows a good knowledge of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of pupils. The traffic light system is used with younger pupils and they understand how this is shows what they have understood.
- 2.29 Teaching for pupils of all ages demonstrates high levels of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, sometimes communicating not only relevant knowledge but great enthusiasm for the subject. These two qualities combine to excite and inspire pupils with a love of learning and results in great engagement with the subject being taught.
- 2.30 Teaching is supported by excellent and up-to-date resources of many sorts including interactive white boards in the majority of classrooms, allowing teaching to make use of extensive on-line resources as well as exciting teaching techniques using the interactivity to enable pupils to participate in lessons.
- 2.31 The school uses a scheme of nationally standardised tests regularly to assess pupils' abilities. These test results are collated with end-of-topic tests, half term grades, termly examination grades, and, for older pupils, mock examination results. Careful tracking of this information is used to monitor the progress of every pupil. Discussion of this information in the regular year group meetings results in effective action to support any pupil who is seen not to be achieving as predicted.
- 2.32 Teaching includes thorough and regular assessment of pupils' work. Marking is clear and often indicates for older pupils how they can improve; teachers also give helpful oral feedback to pupils of all ages in the classroom. In some Middle School lessons, a stick-in note was issued at the end of each lesson which declared the objective of the lesson, followed by an assessment of whether the objective was 'achieved', or needing 'further review'. Pupils said they found this very helpful, since it gives them a clear indication of how well they are doing. In many cases, assessment information is used to plan lessons. One lesson began with a task structured to reinforce a learning objective which marking had shown the class had not fully mastered in the previous lesson; the lesson moved on once all the pupils had understood. In discussion, pupils said how much they appreciated this approach and that their teachers would always help them if they had a difficulty with their work.
- 2.33 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 provided throughout the school is outstanding and the quality of provision for welfare, health and safety is good overall, including in EYFS. Pastoral care has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- 3.2 All staff provide excellent support and guidance for pupils. In EYFS the staff have created a stimulating, warm and welcoming learning environment where children feel safe and valued. In the other areas of the school the teachers take their responsibilities for the pastoral care of pupils in their classes very seriously and pupils say they are made to feel special. The senior management team (SMT) oversees pastoral care effectively and pupils of all ages know to whom they can go for advice and support. .
- 3.3 The high quality of pastoral care is supported by a structure of regular weekly meetings, including the SMT and weekly year group meetings where any concerns are raised and issues addressed. The allocation of form teachers, with two tutors, one male and one female, per class, is highly supportive of individual care for pupils as it gives form teachers time to speak with an individual child when needed. Tutorial periods give time for discussion and for tutors to get to know their form. Throughout the school, any issues of unkindness or occasionally bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively in line with the school's behaviour and bullying policies.
- 3.4 Relationships between teachers and pupils, as well as those amongst pupils, are excellent. They are based on mutual respect. Pupils are most courteous and helpful; they are encouraged to be positive about their own abilities and develop self-discipline. They respond well to praise and behaviour is carefully monitored by use of a 'Form Book', which goes with the class to all lessons.
- 3.5 The extensive programme of PSHE lessons includes work on understanding friendships, bullying and raising self-esteem. Policies and procedures to promote good behaviour and to guard against harassment and bullying are well understood by staff and pupils. Any occasional lapse in behaviour is effectively and fairly dealt with by appropriate sanctions. The school council and dorm council work well and recent initiatives have included replacement of water fountains, extra food at lunchtimes and boarders' choices for Saturday dinner menus. There is a comprehensive induction programme for new pupils and in responses to the pupils' questionnaire pupils said that the school welcomes new pupils. In discussion boarders said that they enjoy their time at school and that they are well looked after.
- 3.6 Child protection measures are successful and all staff have been trained. The three child protection officers, together with the governor with responsibility for child protection, have received up-to-date training at the appropriate level. Attendance and admissions registers are correctly and accurately maintained. Absences are followed up promptly where necessary. Effective risk assessments are in place for both on and off site situations. The school's policies and procedures are compliant with fire regulations. Liaison with the local fire officers is good and, as an added bonus, Pre-Prep pupils enjoy climbing on the fire engine when the fire liaison officer comes to school. Health and safety measures are effective; the health and safety committee works with the SMT and governing body to ensure that the school has due regard to health and safety regulations.

- 3.7 The school provides a healthy and balanced diet using fresh locally sourced produce wherever possible. The menu is varied and changed seasonally. Menus comply with the government recommendations for healthy eating and take good account of medical and religious dietary needs. Good quality medical care is available for pupils who are unwell or had an accident. The school policy and practice meets all the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 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 has developed very strong links with parents, including those with children in the EYFS, consistent with the aims of the school. These links have improved since the last inspection. Links with the community are good as at the time of the last inspection.
- 3.10 Parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction with all areas of the school. They felt strongly that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views and are satisfied that the support provided for their children is good and that teaching helps their children to make progress. A small number of parents raised concerns about the opportunities for information or to discuss their child. Inspection findings, however, show the school has improved communication with parents, that opportunities for parental discussion are plentiful and that the school encourages parental involvement. In discussion during the inspection, parents commented that the school has been working successfully to improve communication and that they appreciate the recent initiatives.
- 3.11 Parents have excellent opportunities to be involved in activities in the school through the newly formed Friends of Edge Grove, which supports the school through social and fundraising events such as the Summer Fete and Christmas Fair, and through supporting a Macmillan coffee morning and inviting new parents. Their fundraising, which takes place through activities designed to bring families together, supports the school in helping to provide for additional activities such as equipment for the Gardening Club. Parents also support the school through volunteering to be helpers on trips and visits. Each class has a parents' representative who is a focal point for communications, and the school also has governors who are parents. The school welcomes parents to plays, matches and celebrations and, in addition, a regular midweek service takes place for parents during term time. During the inspection, the mums' netball team were also seen training on the school courts.
- 3.12 Parents have many worthwhile opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. The head and senior staff have actively promoted an open door policy. Parents in Hart House are encouraged to go into school each day and see examples of their children's work and speak to the form teacher. The newly introduced contact book enables parents and teachers to communicate on a daily basis. Parents in the Junior School are also confident that at the end of the day they can see a member of staff, that they can communicate by email and that their concerns are quickly and appropriately dealt with. The school website and newsletter provide further methods of communication with parents.
- 3.13 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school through the school's website and the handbook for parents, which make all the relevant policies easily accessible. Parents receive excellent information regularly about the progress and attainment of their children. Half termly grade sheets with attainment and effort grades report to parents on how their child is progressing in relation to their individual profile. Full reports, which contain information on attainment and progress and also highlight areas for improvement, are written in the autumn and summer terms and a

- 3.14 The school complaints policy sets out a comprehensive procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints. Parents feel that their concerns are dealt with quickly and carefully and no complaint has been received under the formal written procedure in the last year.
- 3.15 The school has a wide variety of links with the local and wider community. With support from the Friends of Edge Grove the school has been able to contribute substantially to charities, including the children's ward at the local hospital. It has a strong link with county cricket clubs. Pupils and staff support the local church fete and boarders attend Sunday services at the church. The school's Cub Scouts and Beavers packs join the village in the St George's Day parade and Remembrance Day services. The school offers its facilities in the holidays to a variety of day courses, which provide activities for children from the local community as well as from Edge Grove. These are valuable contacts from which lasting friendships form. School facilities are used by the local cricket team and dramatic society, building further valuable links with these organisations.
- 3.16 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

### **The Quality of Boarding Education**

- 3.17 The quality of the boarding experience is good and in particular relationships between boarders and between staff and boarders are excellent. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Boarding supports pupils' education and development effectively and meets the aims of the school in preparing pupils for a happy and successful future.
- 3.18 Relationships between boarders and house staff and amongst boarders themselves are excellent. These relationships are characterised by a sense of trust, respect for and tolerance of others within a relaxed and open context. There is a clear management structure fostering self-esteem, self-confidence, social awareness and mutual respect amongst the boarders. The boarding team meet regularly ensuring the development of a happy and caring atmosphere within a disciplined, motivating environment. Boarders value and enjoy the company and support of the GAP Year students. Staff provide excellent role models and their encouragement and praise supports all boarders. Boarders have a good understanding of how they can raise issues and have regular open opportunities to present their ideas and concerns through the dorm councils.
- 3.19 The school offers boarders a wide variety of recreational, sporting and cultural activities for both boys and girls. Boarders appreciate the balance between structured and free time. They are involved in the choice of activities and enjoy various clubs and hobbies. Boarders are encouraged to use school facilities including the ICT suite, library and sports hall under staff supervision. Regular trips are organised for the boarders at weekends, many of which are suggested by the pupils. Recent visits have included trips to the ice skating rink, a local country park, a local zoo, the seaside and to London.
- 3.20 The accommodation for boarders is satisfactory. The boys and girls like the warm, homely nature of the dormitories and have invested time and energy in personalising their own space. The architecture adds to the individuality of dormitories and social areas but space and facilities for pupils are at a premium in some areas. The school has included proposals to increase the space available in its strategic plan.

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

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 The quality of governance is good overall with some significant strengths and has improved since the last inspection. The governance of the school fully supports the aims and ethos of the school. The members of the governing body have a wide and appropriate range of expertise highly relevant to the life of the school.
- 4.2 The good quality of governance is maintained through regular meetings with full governors' meetings taking place once a term. The work of the governing body is well supported by an excellent committee structure; five committees cover the key areas of the governance of the school. Clear terms of reference for each committee set out the areas of responsibilities and the minutes of these various meetings show that the expertise of committee members is very well used. Each committee includes key members of the school's executive management team, ensuring that information passes freely, directly and quickly in both directions and that the governors know and understand the working of the school and have an effective overview.
- 4.3 The members of the governing body are aware of their responsibilities; for example, the work of the governor with responsibility for child protection ensures that this responsibility is properly discharged, with an annual report and review of policies and procedures. Minutes of the education and administrative committee, which includes the senior staff responsible for academic matters, show consideration of a wide variety of educational matters including in-depth consideration of proposed changes to the school day, staffing issues and educational health and safety matters. The finance and legal and estate committees have a similarly detailed approach to planning for the school. Careful financial planning enables the governing body to make good provision both in staffing and in material resources for the school.
- 4.4 The links between the committees and the senior staff provide the governing body with a good insight into the working of the school. The work of both the whole governing body and the different committees provides significant support and stimulus for the development of the school and for the head and the senior team.
- 4.5 The governing body is effective in discharging its responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of pupils in a number of ways: including through the work of governors with specific responsibilities, through the work of committees where health and safety is an item on all agenda, through regular reporting from the school's health and safety committee to the governors' legal and estates committee, and through the procedure of school policies being presented to the governing body for adoption as the final stage of review.

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

- 4.6 The quality of leadership and management is good and successfully fulfils the aims of the school. There have been significant improvements in the use of assessment and management of the pastoral system since the last inspection. Leadership and management in the EYFS are outstanding.
- 4.7 The new head, appointed in January 2009 has joined a well established team who all have clear areas of responsibility. His leadership of the school began with a review of the mission statement of the school which included consultation at all levels. A clear vision for the school is now expressed through the newly formulated mission statement with its emphasis

on the development of the individual pupil and in the philosophy of the circle of care which is at the heart of the development of the school. This ethos of care permeates the quality of education, the pastoral care and boarding life of the pupils.

- 4.8 The management team is working successfully to improve the school. The development of strategy and the decision making role are the responsibility of the executive management team. The senior management team undertakes the day-to-day management of the school and provides a forum for discussion. This consultation has strengthened the reflective approach to analysing the school's needs and has resulted in a clear school development plan. This year-on-year plan shows the priorities in all main areas of the school, the necessary planning and the steps being taken to put decisions into practice. The effective nature of the process is seen as the plan sets dates for review to determine how successfully changes have been made and previous plans show items being signed off, having been successfully implemented.
- 4.9 A structure of regular meetings at many different levels of management supports the development of policies and procedures. In some cases these meetings are highly effective; for example, year group meetings have supported excellent pastoral care procedures and successful tracking of pupils' progress. However, some monitoring systems are not fully developed resulting in some inconsistent planning at department level.
- 4.10 Departmental handbooks are of variable quality. Some are excellent with comprehensive policies, long and medium plans and clear information on resources, teaching methods and development plans; others lack sufficient detail to support effective teaching. The senior management team has recently strengthened the role of head of department in order to improve consistency and progression for pupils as they move through the school. Work has begun in this area but is not yet fully established. The head and the senior management team are aware of the need for monitoring at all levels to secure consistently high standards, and work has begun on the new professional development and review programme, which is structured to identify and develop best practice in teaching and in departments.
- 4.11 The management of the school is effective in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff. A full induction process for new staff ensures that they are well informed about key areas of school life; regular in-service training for all staff is undertaken in key areas such as child protection and first aid as well as more specific areas of teaching. Robust employment procedures ensure the suitability of staff to work with children.
- 4.12 Finances are carefully managed and accommodation at the school is good. School budgets provide good resources, and recent developments, such as the considerable investment in ICT facilities, allow much more access to ICT both for teaching ICT skills, for use of ICT across the curriculum and for individual research, greatly enhancing pupils' learning.
- 4.13 The administration of the school is efficient and effectively supports the work of the teaching staff and management. Parents commented on the friendly welcome of office staff and their efficient response to enquiries. Staff working in other areas of the school all contribute to the good quality of life for pupils at the school.
- 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 meets its newly-redefined aims. It provides a broad educational experience for all its pupils, preparing them for a successful, happy and healthy future. Pupils' learning is good overall, and outstanding in a significant proportion of lessons when pupils' are challenged to think for themselves and to work independently. The spiritual development of the pupils is outstanding; pupils express a strong moral sense and they are happy members of the school community, willing to take responsibility. Pupils show an awareness and respect for different cultural backgrounds and work together as a harmonious multi-cultural society. Teaching is good with a significant proportion judged to be outstanding. It successfully fulfils the aim of the school to inculcate a love of learning. The quality of pastoral care, support and guidance throughout the school is also outstanding. All staff provide excellent support and guidance for pupils. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are well-established. The school has developed very strong links with parents and links with the community are good. The quality of the boarding experience, which supports pupils' education and development, is good. Governance of the school is good and the committee structure provides outstanding support to the management of the school. The leadership of the school has formulated a clear, child-centred vision for the school and the management team are working successfully to realise this vision. They are aware of areas which require further development in order for consistently high standards to be achieved. These include further work with teachers on differentiated tasks to ensure that all pupils are working to fulfil their potential and to improve standards of planning to ensure clear progression for pupils as they move through the school.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, the school has improved in a number of important areas. The facilities for both the teaching of ICT and its use across the curriculum have been greatly improved. Pupils of all ages now have strong ICT skills, which represents an important improvement since the last inspection. The use of assessment has improved significantly; assessment now supports careful tracking of progress and information is available for teachers to use in their planning. The school has been working successfully to improve communication with parents and parents appreciate the recent initiatives introduced.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

### Next Steps

- 5.4 To further improve the quality of education the school should take the following steps.
1. Continue to strengthen the roles of senior managers to ensure rigorous monitoring of teaching in order to identify and share best practice, including the use of differentiated tasks, so that pupils' achievement is raised still further.
  2. Develop the newly strengthened role of heads of department in order to bring procedures and practices in all departments to the standard of the best to:
    - raise the quality of long and medium term planning; and
    - ensure continuity and progression as pupils move through the school.
- 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 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> 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. Inspectors visited boarding accommodation and the medical room. 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 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009 by one inspector. The inspector observed sessions, talked to the pupils, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and governors. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspector examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.3 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by a team of one Ofsted inspector over four days.

### **List of Inspectors**

Mrs Gwen Caddock	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Daphne Cawthorne	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Tracy Handford	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Mr Alex Osiatynski	Head of department, HMC/GSA/IAPS school
Mrs Susan Walker	Head, GSA school
Mr Peter Willerton	Houseparent, IAPS school
Ms Jo Blank	Early Years Lead Inspector

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

- 7.1 The Early years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is located in Hart House, a purpose built unit for the Pre-Prep. Children use the extensive school grounds, the sports hall, ICT suite, and the dining room. There are 51 children, 18 of whom are in the Nursery and attend part-time. Two children speak different languages at home and the school supports children with additional needs. There is a broad-based selection process to ensure a gender and cultural balance, and that parents support the school's ethos, which is to provide 'child-centred excellence' through inclusive practice and the building of strong relationships.
- 7.2 The provision for children in the EYFS is good with outstanding features. Staff create a stimulating, warm and welcoming learning environment where children feel safe and valued. Children achieve highly in all areas of development, largely due to staff capturing their imagination and enthusiasm for learning. Staff foster excellent links with parents to ensure children's needs are met. Children's welfare is promoted very well, with a significant emphasis on safety. The role of key person is being developed to strengthen the knowledge of and support for, each child. A key strength of the provision is the way staff reflect on practice and are totally committed to ensuring that EYFS principles are central to everything they do. Since the last inspection, staff have developed safeguarding procedures, children's safety awareness, healthy eating, the transition to Year 1, planning, observation and assessment, phonics teaching and self evaluation.
- 7.3 Leadership and management are outstanding. Comprehensive, detailed school policies reflect the high priority given to children's welfare and safety. Safeguarding procedures are well established and receive constant review. Children's well-being is integral to everyday practice and the key person system is currently under discussion. EYFS managers share an excellent vision of high quality practice and strive to achieve excellence. Their extremely effective evaluation process is being further developed by the new school peer review system. Resources are well-organised and there are plans to improve the outdoor learning environment. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion, which is underpinned by the excellent system for following children's interests and recording their individual 'learning journeys'. Children's home cultures are celebrated and circle time is used well to promote positive attitudes to differences. Links with parents are a key strength; they can speak with staff on a daily basis and contribute regularly to their child's learning.
- 7.4 The quality of the provision is good with outstanding features. Adults support children's learning very well. Staff challenge children's thinking, show a genuine interest in their ideas, and value and celebrate their achievements. Staff have a fun and active approach to teaching, which engenders an enthusiasm for learning. The best adult-led sessions inspire children's imagination and sustain their attention. For example, a teacher sometimes becomes a special character for a session, like 'Miss Fit from Lazytown' for a PE session. Staff constantly enrich children's understanding of the world through fascinating explanations. However, these are not always supported by meaningful practical experiences to help children explore ideas in more depth. There is a consistent and effective approach to planning, observation and assessment, which is the cornerstone of practice in the Nursery and is gradually becoming an integral part of practice in Reception. The indoor learning environments are stimulating. Outdoor areas are used well for adult-guided activities, but less well for fostering children's independent ideas, exploration and imagination. Relationships are excellent and staff manage children's behaviour skillfully, through innovative teaching, good organisation and clear boundaries.

- 7.5 Children reach high levels of achievement by the end of the EYFS, most exceeding the Early Learning Goals. Their literacy skills develop rapidly through a well-structured and consistent approach to reading and writing. They make speedy progress in their ICT skills, are confident, articulate and express a growing knowledge of the world. Children are polite, caring, friendly and kind, nurtured by the excellent staff role models. Children respond with excitement and enthusiasm, to what are often inspiring starting points for learning. However, at times, teachers expect the children to listen for long periods, which dampens their natural enthusiasm for learning. Children make confident independent decisions, ask searching questions and are active inquisitive learners when given opportunities to choose activities for themselves. However learning is occasionally restricted in some classes by inconsistent use of the outdoors and an over emphasis on adult-led activities. Children develop a strong sense of keeping themselves safe helped by the 'Worried William' and 'Wise Owl' characters. Children learn a lot about healthy eating, good hygiene practice and how their bodies work and Reception children develop competent physical skills on challenging climbing equipment.

### **What the Setting Should Do to Improve**

- 7.6 To improve further the good quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. develop the outdoor learning environment and increase daily access for all children, with an emphasis on encouraging independent, problem solving, inquisitive learners;
  2. continue to develop the key person system so that aspects of the role are shared amongst all staff.
- 7.7 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.