



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

OAKLANDS SCHOOL STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Oaklands School

Full Name of School	Oaklands School		
DfE Number	881/6025		
EYFS Number	EY395599		
Telephone Number	020 8508 3517		
Fax Number	020 8508 4454		
Email Address	info@oaklandsschool.co.uk		
Head	Mrs Pam Simmonds		
Proprietors	Mr Matthew Hagger, Mr Nicholas Hagger, Mrs Ann Hagger		
Age Range	2½ to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	240		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (85 boys; 155 girls;)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	15	5-11: 134
	3-5 (EYFS):	91	11-18: 0
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	240	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 0
Number of Boarders	Total:	0	
	Full:	0	Weekly: 0
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Cheryl Macnair		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	19 Oct 2010 to 20 Oct 2010		
	15 Nov 2010 to 17 Nov 2010		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

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

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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

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

CONTENTS

1	THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2	THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a)	Main findings	2
(b)	Action points	3
	(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
	(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3	THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a)	The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b)	The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c)	The contribution of teaching	6
4	THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7
(a)	The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b)	The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
5	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	9
(a)	The quality of governance	9
(b)	The quality of leadership and management	9
(c)	The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
6	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	11
(a)	The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(b)	The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(c)	The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(d)	Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
	INSPECTION EVIDENCE	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Situated in extensive grounds, on the edge of Epping Forest, Oaklands is a privately owned independent day school and part of the Oak-Tree Group of Schools. Founded in 1937, the school moved to its present accommodation in an old Victorian house in 1944. The current roll of 240 includes pupils from rising three to eleven years old. Of these, 58 are boys who currently leave the school at the end of Year 2. Girls stay to the end of Year 6. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) caters for 106 boys and girls, 52 of whom are part-time. From September 2011, boys will be able to stay at the school until eleven years old.
- 1.2 The school is administered by the principal, the head and the school administrator who is the bursar. There is no board of governors. The school aims to create a learning environment in which pupils develop their individual talents, enquiring minds and physical abilities. Self-discipline, tolerance and self-esteem are fostered. Oaklands is committed to personal and spiritual development through a high standard of pastoral care and engagement with the local community. Close links with parents are valued and the school provides many opportunities for them to become involved in the life of the school. Since the last inspection in October 2006, an extensive building and renovation programme has provided a new ICT suite, medical room and improved accommodation for the Nursery and special needs department.
- 1.3 Entrance to the EYFS is non selective. Entry from Year 1 is subject to informal testing. The average ability of pupils, as indicated by internal assessments, is above average with a spread of ability that includes a few pupils of below average ability and one with a statement of special needs. The great majority of pupils obtain places in senior independent schools of their choice and a number gain scholarships. The school has identified 54 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 21 receive specialist learning support. Thirty-two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) although none need additional help. Pupils are from predominantly white, professional families with a good mix from Asian, African and Far Eastern backgrounds.

- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Lower Kindergarten	Pre-Nursery
Garden Room	Nursery
Transition	Reception

Preparatory/Junior Department

School	NC name
Year 1	Year 1
Year 2	Year 2
Year 3	Year 3
Year 4	Year 4
Year 5	Year 5
Year 6	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The broad curriculum, enriched by a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities, ensures pupils of all abilities and needs at Oaklands are successful in their learning and their personal development is outstanding. Lively and enthusiastic teaching, which is effective and often excellent, supports pupils' good progress. The school meets its aim to create a learning environment with a wide range of activities in which pupils may develop their individual talents. Opportunities for independent learning and provision for the able, gifted and talented pupils have improved since the last inspection and senior managers are relentless in their efforts to ensure these are more widespread. Pupils' excellent behaviour, positive attitudes and good relationships with each other and their teachers underpin their good academic achievement.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is an outstanding feature of the school and an outcome of excellent pastoral care and effective welfare arrangements. The school council encourages pupils to take responsibility and to contribute to their school and local communities. Through the very impressive number of links with national and international groups, the pupils develop an awareness of the needs of others to which they respond with a genuine concern for their wellbeing. Visitors to the school, including parents, have introduced pupils to social and cultural issues.
- 2.3 The governance of the school working in harmony with the senior management oversees the aims of the school to establish an atmosphere of warmth, friendliness and openness in which creativity, curiosity and the love of learning are fostered. Recruitment procedures ensure the appointment of well qualified staff suitable to work with young children and all required policies are subjected to rigorous review. The recommendations in the last report have been met through an extensive building and restructuring programme. Substantial investment has greatly improved ICT provision; the management are aware that routine use by all teaching staff remains a target for the future. Subject co-ordinators are instrumental in planning and monitoring to further improve the standard of all teaching. Links with parents are very effective and in their responses to questionnaires, parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the quality of education provided and the governance and management of the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Build on what has been achieved and continue to develop pupils' independent learning and the provision for able, gifted and talented pupils.
2. Further the development of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning in the classroom and for all subjects and age groups.
3. Ensure that Nursery children have greater free choice as to whether they play indoors or outside.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 From the EYFS onwards, the overall quality of pupils' learning and their achievement is good. Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to create a learning environment in which individual talents are valued and lively enquiring minds develop. They are able to reflect on their lessons and, in discussions, pupils are articulate and show an understanding of what they have learned. Reading and phonic skills are good and they write fluently in factual and imaginative contexts. When given sufficient guidance, pupils organise their work well. In a number of classes, pupils with LDD benefit from tasks that are tailored to their needs. In the Early Years children are encouraged to try out new things and to learn independently. When given the same opportunity in later years, pupils demonstrate good independent learning skills as demonstrated by Year 4 in a lesson investigating bone growth. The excellent displays of work around the school acknowledge their creative and imaginative skills. The introduction of a new framework to improve achievement in mental arithmetic and problem solving is proving effective. Pupils work well together in an atmosphere of mutual support and their learning is enhanced by excellent behaviour and attitudes; they are keen learners and settle to work with enthusiasm. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and successful in gaining places and scholarships in their chosen secondary schools.
- 3.2 Children attain well in the Foundation Stage reaching, and in many cases exceeding, the Early Learning Goals. The following analysis uses the national data for years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in national tests at age eleven have been above the national average for maintained primary schools. The school has ceased to enter pupils for national tests at age seven but when they did the tests, in 2007 and 2008, results were far above the national average for maintained primary schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.3 The school is successful in local and national competitions, and pupils enjoy noteworthy success. Several entrants in the Young Writers' and Young Poets' competitions have been published and the majority of entrants are awarded distinction or merit certificates by the London Academy of Music and Drama. Every pupil takes part in a musical show each year and many have danced in local productions and in the Red Cross Dance for Life competition. The talents of choristers and musicians are demonstrated in the annual school concert. Individual pupils and teams excel in sports events such as cross-country, athletics and swimming events and some have been selected to compete in national competitions. Their success in academic work, the arts and sport owes much to their positive attitudes, opportunities available in the curriculum and the encouragement and support they receive from their teachers.

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

- 3.4 The curriculum and the extra-curricular arrangements are effective in enabling pupils of all ages and abilities to reach good standards in a wide range of subjects and activities. This fulfils the school's aim to help pupils to develop lively and enquiring minds. Coverage of the requisite areas of learning is sound and each subject area has detailed plans for future development and regular review results in revision of the curricular content to suit the needs of pupils. Recent additions have included the introduction of a new phonics and mathematics scheme, a refurbished library, drama across the curriculum and an annual curriculum week based on a chosen theme; this year it was London. A particular feature is the introduction of French from Reception and a plan to introduce Spanish as a second modern foreign language. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is an integral part of the curriculum and includes a programme which helps children to develop skills in understanding another's point of view, working in a group, sticking at things when they get difficult and managing worries. Visits by parents and members of the local community broaden pupils' understanding of the society in which they live and in which they will work as adults. All pupils with LDD receive individual educational programmes and since the last inspection the appointment of specialist staff has improved provision. The school has responded to a recommendation, made at the last inspection, and is beginning to provide more opportunities for independent learning and more challenging work for the able and gifted pupils. These aspects of the curriculum are still developing in some subject areas. Recent investment in ICT and the appointment of a very able team of ICT staff has led to the development of skills in all ages and ability groups. The planning for all pupils to use these skills in their subject lessons is inconsistent.
- 3.5 The programme of extra-curricular activities is good. Many teachers plan trips and visits to extend cultural education and arrange for guest speakers to widen pupils' understanding of their subjects. Pupils benefit from links with the community and they support a number of charities. They sponsor a pony at the local riding trust for children with disabilities and an Indian child through Action Aid. Their community service includes visiting old people's homes, delivering harvest goods and singing at local charitable events. A wide choice of clubs for pupils after school and during Friday afternoon enables them to follow their interests and to try something new. All pupils participate and their attendance and welfare is carefully monitored. The annual programme is drawn up with regard to input from parents who are given detailed information about extra-curricular activities and are invited to indicate the clubs they wish their son or daughter to attend. Pupils use their school council to suggest new clubs and suitable charities to support. In their questionnaires, pupils expressed great satisfaction with the range of activities on offer. A co-ordinator monitors outcomes and liaises with outside contributors and an improvement has been made in setting more appropriate learning objectives. A comprehensive extra-curricular activities handbook ensures the safety of pupils participating by setting out procedures for registering attendees, child protection issues and how to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils in all activities.
- 3.6 The outstanding links with the local community and international organisations are planned to complement the curriculum and to contribute to the personal development of pupils. Arrangements are made for visitors to talk to pupils about a range of topics including charities, different religions and history topics, and police visits to discuss the effects of taking drugs and bullying. A growing awareness of

their environment and the needs of others living in it is developed through visits to old people's homes, nature walks with representatives of a local nature trust, geographical surveys locally and at Southend for a beach study. All these activities and many more make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development which is outstanding.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.7 The pupils' achievements are promoted by lively and enthusiastic teaching, some of which is excellent. In line with the school's aim to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their imagination, creativity and physical ability, teachers plan inventive activities to stimulate interest, such as the archaeological enquiry carried out by pupils in Year 3. Creative work is promoted across the curriculum and the very high quality displays of pupils' work around the school acknowledge their achievements. Basic skills are emphasised; in a Year 6 English lesson spelling patterns and how to use a dictionary were understood. In Year 4 mathematics, pupils were introduced to the technique of measuring perimeters by tracing around their hands and feet. Teachers know their subject and their pupils well and in most lessons a brisk pace and the use of humour stimulated engagement. Where clear instructions were lacking and the approach indecisive, pupils lost interest and made slow progress. Classrooms are well resourced and in most cases used effectively to improve the learning experience of all pupils. A strong ICT department is promoting the use of ICT in the classroom as a teaching and learning tool but, as yet, this is not widespread. Much teaching is a major factor in helping pupils to develop their individual strengths and fulfils the school's aspiration for pupils 'to go further and aim higher'. Through a structured programme of mutual lesson observation and in-service training, the quality of teaching is monitored and subject co-ordinators are effective in their support and guidance for improvement.
- 3.8 Since the last inspection, the school has made appointments to strengthen the learning support department who keep teachers informed of the special needs of their pupils. When this information is used effectively, different tasks are planned to meet the needs of different ability groups and some pupils have one-to-one help as identified in their individual education plans. In some lessons the needs of the able, gifted and talented pupils are met by the preparation of more challenging work. Management has adopted strategies to ensure this practice becomes widespread. Teaching assistants are deployed most effectively to give extra help where it is needed. Teachers of older pupils employ a traffic light system of notation to highlight achievement and progress in their record keeping. In many workbooks, cheerful stickers are used to encourage pupils and, in some books, helpful comments and targets guide pupils towards improvement. This was particularly well used in English but lacking in some subjects. The EYFS welcomes excellent observations from parents of what their children know, understand and can do. Results in tests and the assessment of work are used to monitor progress but these are not used effectively to set future targets and do not feed into the evaluating next steps for learning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils of all ages have outstanding personal qualities. The school is successful in its aim to cultivate self-discipline, self-esteem, responsibility and tolerance. From the EYFS, pupils show consideration for each other and display excellent behaviour and self-confidence. Posts of responsibility are readily filled and in their pre-inspection questionnaires, pupils expressed the opinion that the school listens to their views.
- 4.2 Within a Christian framework, the school welcomes pupils of all faiths and cultural backgrounds. Pupils develop a good understanding of other traditions and a recent assembly for the younger pupils, led by teachers and parents, celebrated Diwali. Visitors from local religious institutions have spoken about their faiths and pupils respond positively to the need for tolerance towards those with different beliefs. A working party has introduced class assemblies when pupils discuss the ethos words of the week. Pupils' appreciation of beauty and the arts is apparent in the very high standard of work displayed around the school. Their understanding of nature and the changing of the seasons is enhanced through use of the extensive and beautiful grounds which include a nature trail.
- 4.3 A clear sense of right and wrong is apparent in pupils' treatment of each other and their respect for the school's code of conduct. Classes take turns to choose words to illustrate how they should behave towards each other and these are displayed on the Oaklands Ethos Tree. Year 5 pupils act as buddies and organise games for younger pupils at playtime and a friendship bench encourages good relationships between age groups. In a school assembly written by senior girls, scenarios were acted out to illustrate how to ensure everyone enjoyed their break time. This emphasised the need to include everyone, to play fairly and to share play equipment; an attitude reinforced in a Year 1 games lessons. In all their lessons pupils were excellently behaved and ready to listen to other points of view. Pupils are able to articulate their understanding of moral values: this was apparent in conversations and the work in their books.
- 4.4 The excellent pastoral care of their pupils and the examples set by staff encourage the development of self-confidence and social awareness. Pupils' response to charitable events is extremely positive and they give their time and donations in the true spirit of philanthropy. They are willing to take responsibility. Senior pupils are prefects for younger forms, house captains organise teams for sports day and they play an important role on special event days. Chinese New Year day took place in January 2010 in which pupils took an active interest and developed their understanding of another society. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school council and opportunities to make suggestions for charity support and matters concerning the day-to-day life in the school.
- 4.5 A growing awareness of their own cultural background is apparent in pupils' work. Many visits, arranged to introduce pupils to their local and wider communities, have included those from the school nurse, the community police officer and a parent with responsibility for a regional park being used in the forthcoming paralympic games. Pupils are made aware of other cultures in many of their lessons. In French they have combined their dramatic and language skills to act out a French café scene and to stage a fashion show. Through their contact with schools abroad, pupils come to understand something about the lives of other schoolchildren.

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

- 4.6 The pastoral care of pupils is excellent and all necessary measures to ensure their welfare, health and safety are met in full. The school maintains its commitment to ensuring that all children and adults are able to work together in a healthy and safe environment. Since the last inspection, a health and safety co-ordinator has been appointed to oversee procedures and share good practice between the three schools in the Oak-Tree Group. This has led to an improvement in provision.
- 4.7 From the EYFS, form teachers are responsible for the well-being of their pupils. They are kept well informed of any learning needs and health issues. Detailed pastoral and academic folders record actions and progress. Staff training has prepared teachers for dealing with stressful situations such as counselling a pupil after bereavement. Registration time provides a constructive start to the day. Teachers outline the activities of the day and discuss issues such as how to deal with problems and make good decisions, or listen to them read. A Year 2 class were given time to reflect on what they enjoy doing, this was followed by making a card for their parents to tell them what they will try to achieve next. Excellent relationships and an atmosphere of trust, in which all pupils feel valued, is at the heart of excellent pastoral care. In conversation pupils say their teachers look after them well and they are happy at school. All parents responding to pre-inspection questionnaires expressed appreciation of the pastoral help given to their child, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values and the high standard of behaviour.
- 4.8 The school has all the required policies to ensure care of their pupils. The anti-bullying policy is understood by all pupils and notices in their classrooms remind them of how to treat each other. Another illustrates the four steps taken when they misbehave. Sanctions are rarely needed; where disciplinary action is taken, the school keeps appropriate records of action and outcome. Although a few older pupils thought sanctions outweighed rewards, in lessons, a clear emphasis was seen to be given to praise. A Year 2 class proudly showed their folders in which they collect stickers as a reward for good behaviour or effort in class; some are made Super Stars for the day. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and say the food provided in school is excellent. They appreciate the many opportunities to take physical exercise particularly in the grounds. For Nursery children the choice as to whether they play indoors or outside is limited. Supervision of pupils at all times is thorough with plenty of staff on duty at recreation times and on the gate after school.
- 4.9 The safeguarding policy meets all regulatory requirements and is well publicised in staff handbooks. Parents receive a booklet outlining measures taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their children. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, are appropriately trained and two members of the senior staff are designated child protection officers. The safe recruitment of staff is meticulous. A co-ordinator chairs the health and safety committee in school and works closely with the county council to ensure all risk assessments, checks of electrical equipment and fire prevention measures are compliant with regulations. The school fulfils its duties under the Special Educational Needs and Disciplinary Act and race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation. Since the last inspection, facilities for children who are ill have been appropriately improved, medicines are safely stored and suitable records kept. The majority of staff are trained in first aid, four of these at the higher level. The attendance and admission registers are well maintained and suitably stored for the last three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent. Oaklands is run by a proprietor, known as the principal, in common with two other schools in the Oak-Tree Group. He visits frequently and works closely with the leadership and management team and the very able school bursar. Through scrupulous review of policies, oversight of the welfare of pupils and the recruitment of well qualified staff, considerable progress has been made in fulfilling the school's aim to provide a first class education for all its pupils.
- 5.2 The principal is responsible for financial management and, working closely with the bursar, has overseen substantial investment in the refurbishment and restructuring of the school to meet the recommendations in the last report. A new Nursery and specialist teaching rooms have improved the facilities and resources with a positive impact on pupils' learning and development. Since the last inspection, investment has transformed the ICT facilities and the ICT room is used well. This resource is beginning to be a feature in the class room as a teaching and learning tool.
- 5.3 All recruitment procedures are robust. The principal meets with staff informally to consult on day-to-day matters and formally at the start of each term to set targets and to share a vision for future development. These are also shared with the parents' association and in their pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the governance of the school. Performance management targets are set with the head and expressed in the comprehensive school development plan. Responsibility for the welfare of pupils is well understood and the principal has attended staff recruitment and safeguarding training. He sits on the health and safety committee. Cluster meetings of staff from all three schools result in the sharing of good practice. The strongest feature of the governance is the hands-on approach by the principal, his experience of running three schools and his passion for providing the very best educational experience for the pupils.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The school, including the EYFS, is well led and by a very able senior management team who seek every opportunity to make improvements in the quality of education provided for all pupils. The action plan produced to meet recommendations in the last report has been successfully completed.
- 5.5 The three year school development plan sets out targets for all aspects of the school's provision. Some targets are recorded as completed without a useful evaluation of their success. Classroom resources have been much improved and a focus on handwriting, mental arithmetic and problem solving has been well monitored and has led to a marked improvement in these areas. The school has identified ways to ensure more widespread opportunities for independent learning and effective use of ICT in all classrooms. These have yet to be adopted by all subject areas. A consistent approach across all subjects to meeting pupils' special educational needs, including those of the able pupils, have yet to be met in full. The very able team of subject co-ordinators are actively following plans to bring about improvement in these areas. Subject co-ordinators and individual teachers plan and manage their subject areas very well. Detailed schemes of work are supplemented by careful assessment, tracking of progress and thorough record keeping.

- 5.6 The school has a generous budget to improve provision in all areas of the school through meeting the training needs which are identified for teaching and non-teaching staff.

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

- 5.7 The school has excellent links with parents, guardians and the community. Parents express great confidence in the quality of education provided. The range and diversity of links with the local community and those further afield are a strength of the school.
- 5.8 From the EYFS, parents feel welcome and appreciate the opportunities to become involved in the life of the school. Many have visited the school to give talks and to organise special events. Parents of the youngest pupils are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning; they observe what their children know, understand and can do. Parents find it easy to communicate with the school and on many occasions during the inspection they were seen in informal meetings with staff who readily made themselves available at the end of school. The majority of parents say responses to questions are swift and they understand the procedure for voicing concerns. These are very well met and only one formal complaint has been received this year. Informative reports on their child's progress, many with targets for improvement, are sent twice a year and followed by a parents' consultation evening. Meetings are arranged to discuss a range of topics at transition stages including preparation for secondary school. Concerns are identified through parental surveys and the school considers these when drawing up development plans. The school communicates well with parents through the Acorn Newsletter, bulletins and a calendar of events and they are made aware of school policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. All prospective parents receive appropriate information about the school, its ethos and policies.

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 Oaklands School provides an excellent start to the children's education. Since the previous inspection, the accommodation for two and three year olds has been moved to a newly refurbished room. This has had a positive impact on the children's learning and development. The bright stimulating learning environments of the Pre-Nursery for children aged two and a half to three, the Nursery for three and four year olds, and the three Reception classrooms, for four to five year olds, ensure children feel valued and cared for very well. The capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.

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

6.2 Leadership and management of the early years is excellent. Adults strive to ensure a high quality of pupil care is provided. Children's well-being and safeguarding are enhanced by thorough risk assessments and genuine care and concern for the welfare of the children. Policies and documentation are comprehensive and meet all requirements. They are consistently followed across the three year groups. Partnership with parents and carers is close and they are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. This was demonstrated by the excellent Diwali assembly led by parents of children in the school. Adults regularly make observations of what their children know, understand and can do and plot these against their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Individual targets are not set from these excellent observations and they do not feed into evaluating next steps for individual learning or the development of the curriculum. The small class sizes mean adults know the children well and plan work to challenge them in their learning.

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

6.3 The provision is excellent with caring, involved adults who support learning and development well. The stunning grounds are used very well by all children and enhance the quality of provision but the Reception classes do not have easy access to the outside learning environment. Resources throughout are excellent and there is evidence in planning that these are regularly changed to ensure children are encouraged to try out new things and to learn independently. Lessons are enhanced by specialist teaching and this is available even for the youngest children in the school. An outstanding music lesson, for example, really captured the youngest children's imagination and great fun was had by all. Welfare requirements are met well.

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

- 6.4 All children achieve well. They reach, and in many instances exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are encouraged to become independent learners when they first start at school and they make excellent progress in developing their personal skills. By the end of Reception, children obtain above average standards for their age; they read well and write simple sentences. They attain good understanding of numbers and enjoy problem solving. They are clearly interested and motivated to learn. Children feel safe and are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They really enjoy the healthy meals on offer at lunch time. Outstanding behaviour and active participation in the wide range of activities on offer enhances the progress children make and ensures that they reach very high standards during their time in the early years. This means they start in Year 1 with above expected levels of attainment.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Patricia Cullen	Reporting Inspector
Mr Douglas Buchanan	Former Deputy Head IAPS school
Mrs Annabelle Farnish	Head of an ISA school
Ms Sue Vale	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Jill Lance	Former Head, IAPS school