

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Eversfield Preparatory School

Full Name of the School	Eversfield Preparatory School
DCSF Number	334/6000
Early Years Number	N/A
Registered Charity Number	528966
Address	647 Warwick Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1AT.
Telephone Number	0121 705 0354
Fax Number	0121 709 0168
Email Address	enquiries@eversfield.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Robert Yates
Chair of Governors	Mrs Ethne Owen
Age Range	2½ to 11
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	8th to 11th June 2009

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage were not inspected as part of this inspection.

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 The school's aims are to provide a first-class education for boys and girls, preparing them for entry to leading senior schools, a curriculum which values academic excellence whilst retaining breadth and nurturing creative, sporting, technical and social skills, and a strong sense of community, to promote feelings of security and self-confidence. It also seeks to instil high moral standards and responsible attitudes based upon clear and relevant Christian teaching.
- 1.2 The school is an educational trust run by a governing body, and occupies five acres of land in an urban setting in the middle of Solihull. Its premises are a mixture of Victorian and Edwardian housing and purpose-built sections. Founded in 1931, it was an all boys' prep school with an upper age range of thirteen until 1999, when the governors took the decision to reduce the upper age range to eleven and to open the doors to girls, whose numbers are slowly increasing. The school then updated its Early Years Foundation Stage facility. The present headmaster was appointed in 2006, and a largely new leadership team was created, partly in response to the recommendations of the previous ISI report.
- 1.3 The school has 226 full-time pupils, comprising 171 boys and 55 girls. It has 53 part-time children in the Nursery, including 36 boys and 17 girls.
- 1.4 Analysis of baseline entry assessments indicates that the ability profile of the school is above the national average. Therefore, if pupils are performing in line with their abilities, their results in national tests at the ages of seven and eleven will be above the average for all maintained primary schools.
- 1.5 The school has 20 pupils for whom English is an additional language, coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds, of whom 6 need and receive support. No pupils have statements of special educational needs, but 27 are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom 23 receive additional support.
- 1.6 Pupils' parents are largely drawn from professional and business backgrounds, normally including a significant minority whose work is based on fixed-term contracts, resulting in a higher than average rate of change in the pupil population.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The school provides a stimulating and fulfilling educational experience of excellent quality. It successfully achieves its aim of providing academic excellence with breadth, and of nurturing creative, sporting, social and technical skills. Since the last inspection, in 2002, curriculum planning has been much improved and is now consistent and detailed, and makes provision for design and technology (DT) for all classes.
- 2.2 A thoughtful and imaginative approach to provision ensures that the well-structured curriculum supports all aspects of pupils' development. In the Early Years Foundation Stage it is based on the associated framework and covers the six areas of learning well, paying due attention to the well-being of every child and providing the children with an outstanding variety of stimulating activities. From Year 1 onwards, the curriculum encompasses the full range of National Curriculum subjects with the addition of religious education, French, starting in the Reception class, and Latin as an option in Years 5 and 6.
- 2.3 The curriculum is extremely well planned and provides pupils with excellent opportunities for linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological development. The human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development of pupils is also well covered. The curriculum also enables pupils to acquire necessary skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy, as well as in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' creative and expressive development is very well catered for in music, art and DT. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills throughout the curriculum and in concerts, arts weeks, and dramatic and musical productions. At the time of the inspection for example, the Nursery children gave a concert, and Years 5 and 6 were rehearsing for a performance of *Bugsy Malone*. Physical development is well supported through carefully structured physical education lessons and through a generous programme of games that extends into extra-curricular provision.
- 2.4 An extremely well-planned scheme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), together with citizenship, promotes pupils' personal development. Parents and other speakers come into school to share their professional knowledge and expertise, of, for example, the National Health Service. The school has well-developed links with the local community. Examples of this are the annual visits by Year 2 pupils to a local care home at Harvest and Christmas to sing songs, play instruments and talk to the elderly residents. Day and residential trips at home and abroad successfully encourage independence and foster leadership skills. Pupils as young as four act as monitors, while a successful and much liked 'buddy system' gives Year 6 pupils the opportunity to mentor and befriend children from the Reception classes.
- 2.5 Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education and development. Staff work closely together to ensure a smooth transfer from year to year. Pupils in their final year at the school are very well prepared for the selection procedures they face. Individual advice is given to pupils and their parents through a senior school choices evening and written guides give information on next schools. Pupils leave as confident, articulate individuals with a strong sense of responsibility and appropriate study skills to take to the next stage of their education. They expressed appreciation for the careful preparation they are given to enable them to move on successfully.

- 2.6 The curriculum is planned thoroughly, and subject documentation lays out clearly how pupils can learn and progress. The written curriculum document is comprehensive and inclusive. For example, Latin is offered to those pupils whom the school thinks would derive most benefit from it, but no pupil who wishes to study it is excluded. The activities programme for pupils of all ages is excellent. Pupils expressed a high level of satisfaction with the range offered, in both lunchtime and after-school sessions. These include music tuition, tennis, tap dancing, Spanish, drama, art, chess, a garden club, French and numerous sporting clubs. Pupils may suggest new activities through the school council, and almost all participate at some stage in the extra-curricular programme.
- 2.7 Provision for pupils with LDD is excellent. Individual programmes are devised by the special educational needs co-ordinator, and shared with form staff and subject teachers, who then provide specific support for these pupils in their lessons. Pupils' progress is reviewed thoroughly and regularly, and excellent records and parent feedback are maintained. The school has identified a small number of pupils who are judged to be gifted or talented. Some provision is made for these pupils but the school is aware that this is a somewhat under-developed area.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Pupils achieve high standards in learning, and so the school's aim to provide a first-class education for boys and girls, preparing them for entry to leading senior schools, is well advanced. This is a marked improvement on the standard noted at the last inspection.
- 2.10 High standards of literacy and numeracy are achieved throughout the school. Pupils soon become articulate, as seen in Year 2 where they discussed critically the similarities and differences which gave rise to the fame of various figures in history. They are good at listening, both to teachers and their peers. In the animated discussions they had with inspectors, they were able both to listen and to take turns in the conversation. Reasoning skills are developed throughout the school, and were displayed, for example, in history lessons, where conclusions were drawn from the study of various original source materials. Pupils demonstrate their well-developed reading skills in a variety of contexts, including in the library, where they regularly do research and read for pleasure. The general standard of presentation of work, whether hand scripted or produced on a computer, is excellent. Pupils are adept in their use of ICT throughout the curriculum. Many examples of good achievement in ICT were seen, such as Year 6 geographers' research topic on the Amazon Rainforest, the creation of good graphs in various pieces of work completed for science, and Year 4 pupils' study of a 'virtual' pond and their enjoyment of a virtual pond-dipping activity. The ladybirds drawn by Reception children showed good command of the computer skills needed.
- 2.11 Pupils develop their numeracy skills in mathematics and also use them very effectively elsewhere, for example to create tally charts for use in a traffic survey. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, good levels of numeracy were shown in handling equations and in calculating the area of a circle. The school has many examples of good creative work, such as the high quality two- and three-dimensional art work on display and much creative writing, including some heartfelt accounts of *The Lady of Shalott*. Pupils have achieved well in music and drama examinations, while younger children in the Nursery demonstrated a high level of learning and achievement in their enchanting performance of *Noah's Ark*.

- 2.12 No significant differences exist in achievement between different groups of pupils, subjects or curriculum areas, although in some subjects, where pupils respond to much closed questioning, the most able pupils do not develop the wider grasp of the subject of which they are capable. The excellent support given to pupils with LDD encourages them to make good progress.
- 2.13 Pupils' attainment in national tests at the ages of seven and eleven is high in relation to their abilities. Results over the last three years have been far above the national average for maintained primary schools. Pupils progress very well at all ages in relation to their abilities. They have high rates of success in entry to senior schools, and in 2009 obtained seventeen scholarships. The attainment of Early Years Foundation Stage children is above nationally expected levels and is recorded in detail.
- 2.14 During the inspection many examples were seen of pupils' good standards in note-taking, study skills and organising their work for themselves. For instance, pupils had used a range of skills to do internet and textbook research on the composition of the Indian national flag.
- 2.15 Pupils show enthusiasm for their studies. They settle quickly to the task in hand, apply themselves well and persevere. An example of this was seen in one class where pupils were reluctant to go to break until they had finished the work they were doing. They work well together with evidence of mutual respect and they take pleasure in each other's achievements. They enjoy team work, both on the sports field, as seen in their shared encouragement on the rounders team, and in class, where, for example, Year 6 pupils listened to each other and co-operated well in solving mathematical puzzles. The editorial team drawn from Years 4, 5 and 6 works very well together to produce a high quality pupils' magazine, *Eversfield Chat*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.16 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent, and meets the school's aim to promote high moral standards and responsible attitudes within a Christian framework. The previous report recommended a written PSHE syllabus and a curriculum that enabled pupils to develop awareness of other faiths; both these recommendations have since been fulfilled.
- 2.17 Pupils develop very well spiritually through their assemblies, and through the use they make of the ample opportunity provided for reflection and personal prayer. Themes are chosen which they can relate to their own development, as, for example, when the assembly about talents could be linked to a previous occasion when pupils had been encouraged to use their talents in order to raise money for charity. The successful outcome of this enterprise gave pupils a high level of self-esteem. The respect which staff show for pupils' qualities and gifts further develops their self-confidence, to the point where pupils clearly value themselves and those around them. During assemblies, pupils reflect on questions of belief, values and significant experiences in their lives. They respond to the Christian ethos of the school, apparent in assemblies, and also in hymn practices, services in church and religious education lessons. Through all of these, pupils learn to know themselves better, and to practise the school's exhortation to be the best they can be. Pupils experienced wonder when they visited a Hindu temple, and saw it in all its beauty, dominating the contrasting area around it. Pupils are able to find in music, art and drama expressions of feeling which sometimes enrich their own understanding of emotion. For example, a wall display of poetry written in response to paintings demonstrated pupils' ability to understand the emotional qualities the art work conveyed.

- 2.18 Moral development is strong, and pupils keenly respond to the ethos of mutual respect within the school. In Year 3 PSHE lessons, pupils study the issues involved in making choices, and learn that actions have both intended and unintended consequences. In Year 4, pupils who were discussing children's rights were learning that with rights come responsibilities. Pupils in Year 6 had very clear ideas about crime and punishment and the function of the law, but also considered their own moral code.
- 2.19 Pupils develop very well socially in many ways. Year 6 pupils show great responsibility in running the school library effectively and for being table heads at lunch, where they serve the food fairly, enable everyone to join in the conversation, and ensure that the table is left clean and tidy at the end of the meal. They also make a good job of looking after the overhead projector in assembly and organising the video clips in some lessons. Many pupils are happy to step into leadership posts and other areas of responsibility. They take duties such as those of head boy and girl, house captains and representatives on the school council very seriously. Pupils show an increasing awareness of public institutions as they grow older, and in conversation, senior pupils were able to discuss the recent elections to the European Parliament, and had some understanding of the size and scope of the National Health Service. The school is permeated with an unmistakable sense of being a community to which everyone belongs. Older pupils mentor younger ones, while school teams, choirs and many of the extra-curricular activities add to the social mix available to all, and contribute to pupils' strong feelings of belonging and pride in their community. Pupils said repeatedly that they were unaware of any bullying in the school, and they suggested that bullying would be contrary to the community spirit; they were totally confident that if there were any bullying it would be dealt with quickly. No evidence of bullying was found by inspectors.
- 2.20 Cultural development is very well handled through religious education and PSHE lessons, and so pupils develop a strong cultural awareness. Parents of different faiths come into school to talk to pupils about their beliefs and customs. The fund raising efforts for the Bethesda project in India have raised awareness of poverty and social deprivation, while 'green' issues, such as the morality of denuding the world's rainforests in order to provide land for impoverished farmers, are fervently discussed. Pupils learn about other faiths, studying one major religion for part of each year, and, where possible, visiting one of its places of worship. Pupils discuss the beliefs and customs of other religions in a respectful way, in line with the school's policy. Other cultures also form part of the curriculum where appropriate, as in music and art, from which pupils widen their knowledge and enjoyment of the cultural world.
- 2.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.22 The quality of teaching is high throughout, and in line with the school's aims to provide a first-class education preparing pupils for entry to senior schools and to offer a curriculum that values academic excellence. The various areas for improvement identified in the previous report have been addressed successfully, although widening the intellectual experience of the more able pupils, and extending to all teachers the many very good teaching methods shown by most, are areas for continuing improvement, of which the school is aware.
- 2.23 Teaching enables all pupils to learn and progress well, increasing their understanding and developing their skills. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, children know what is expected of them and are keen to complete the tasks they are set, thereby making very good progress. Pupils with LDD are given additional support and set tasks carefully prepared and directed by the class teacher to enable them to develop their understanding and skills. Clear specialist advice is given to teachers on how to support these pupils, and the liaison with class teachers is good. The use of teaching assistants is well managed to provide additional teaching support.
- 2.24 Throughout the school, teachers ensure that pupils enjoy their lessons, take interest in their work and show their increasing ability to think for themselves. Children in Reception were excited using the classroom shop, while at the same time they were developing their understanding and skill with money. Among the pre-inspection questionnaires, pupils commented that teachers are adept at knowing when to give help and when to allow them to work things out for themselves. This was seen in practice throughout the school. Although several pupils said that homework took too long, it was nevertheless noticeable that they mostly did it carefully, and with apparent enthusiasm for the tasks involved. Length of time spent on homework is currently being monitored by the school.
- 2.25 Teachers praise and highlight good behaviour and achievement, and 'plus' points are awarded, which are valued by the pupils. Positive feedback is used by all teachers, and is appreciated by pupils who respond with good behaviour and increased attention. In lessons observed, pupils behaved responsibly, and in many, teachers were adept at generating great enthusiasm among the pupils.
- 2.26 Planning of lessons is good. Teaching assistants in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a valuable contribution to the planning of activities, and throughout the school their contribution is organised as an effective and integral part of the teaching process. Activities chosen are generally appropriate, and based on teachers' clear understanding of pupils' needs. Planning for more able pupils in Year 6 involves their tackling work from the curriculum for Years 7 and 8 in some core subjects. This provides a challenge which these pupils enjoy, but the opportunity to cover areas outside the normal curriculum, and to polish pupils' thinking skills is thus not fully utilised. In most lessons a good variety of teaching methods is used and pupils respond to this very well. Occasionally too great a reliance on printed worksheets limits the range of experience for pupils. All lessons are the result of careful thought, have clearly stated targets and outcomes, and show wise management of teaching time. This was seen in a science lesson in Year 6 where pupils greatly enjoyed exploding 'bombs' of bicarbonate of soda and vinegar in the playground, leading to a discussion on how to measure the reaction and what variables would affect the results.
- 2.27 Teachers know their pupils well, as is clearly seen in lesson plans where individual needs are addressed. In the many good or outstanding lessons that were seen, teachers had given thought to pupils' prior attainment so that the lesson always provided an extension to this. In those very few lessons which were no more than satisfactory, lack of pace and of open-ended

questions did not fully address pupils' needs, thus limiting progress. In all lessons observed teachers demonstrated excellent subject knowledge, and in the Nursery and Reception, staff were fully conversant with Early Years Foundation Stage and *Every Child Matters* documentation.

- 2.28 The school has a good range, quality and quantity of resources which are well used to enhance teaching and learning. Interactive white boards are to be found in most teaching areas, and staff are competent in their use. Pupils have access to an ICT room with a bank of twenty computers, as well as a stock of laptops which are used in any area of the school. The library is a valuable resource to support teaching, and teachers ensure that it is well used by pupils both for research and for reading for pleasure.
- 2.29 Assessment of pupils' work is excellent, being both regular and extremely thorough. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, detailed observations are recorded by teachers and support staff, and are used to assist in future planning and to contribute to each child's achievement profile. Feedback to older pupils through marking and comments in books is outstanding, and provides both praise and ways in which attainment can be improved. Peer assessment is used in some curriculum areas, such as English, and self-assessment is also encouraged. The school has a comprehensive assessment policy which is effectively implemented and underpins the excellence of assessment as a whole. Pupils' performance, as measured by the school, is communicated to parents both through reports, and, in Years 2 and 6, through the results of nationally standardised tests. In core subjects, internal assessment results are entered into the school system and are used to track progress both for individuals and year groups. Pupils whose progress is slower than expected are identified and discussed, and action is taken. This highly effective and well-used system is being extended into other curriculum areas, with a scheduled review.
- 2.30 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 Overall, the quality of the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good, with pastoral care being excellent. The school's aim to build a strong sense of community is very well met. The school has also met the recommendations of the last inspection. However, it has had some shortcomings in its handling of the recruitment of staff.
- 3.2 Staff support the pupils in a caring and considerate way, and pupils say they feel happy that their concerns can be discussed and dealt with fairly. Form tutors provide guidance for their pupils, and all staff make effective role models for pupils to emulate. Staff respect the pupils, evident in the way they take the trouble to greet them individually, and to respond to pupils greeting them.
- 3.3 The school has a good set of written policies for its pastoral care, which staff implement to the full. Members of the senior leadership team have responsibility for specific areas of the school, so that all staff can be supported in their pastoral care of the pupils. Form time, house meetings and assemblies are well used to provide good pastoral care, and pupils commented that the arrangements in this school make them feel confident.
- 3.4 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent. They exchange information and hold conversations in a friendly way, and they evidently enjoy listening to each other. Pupils trust the staff to treat them fairly, to take an interest in their concerns and to respond quickly when their support is needed. Similarly, relationships amongst pupils are excellent, and are based on self-confidence and mutual respect.
- 3.5 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are well established and effective. The house point system, used from Reception to Year 6, is popular with pupils, who work hard to achieve 'plus' points and avoid 'minus' ones. Minus points work well, though are rarely used unless previous discussion of a concern has not proved effective. Good behaviour is also promoted through the recently expanded PSHE programme. A good anti-bullying policy is now in place.
- 3.6 Staff take care to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety throughout the whole age range. Effective child protection measures have been drawn up, with the headmaster as the designated and appropriately trained child protection officer (CPO). Arrangements for a second teacher to be trained and registered as a CPO are in hand. This is intended to bring the school into line with the recognised good practice of having CPOs of both genders in a co-educational school, and one of them being readily accessible to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Child protection procedures are suitably stated in the school's revised child protection policy, but have not always been implemented fully. Some staff have been appointed before the school has received official clearance for them.
- 3.7 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. The school has well-organised fire policies, has received and acted upon advice from the fire service, holds regular evacuation practices and has installed new fire doors on the top floor. Risk assessments have been undertaken throughout the school, electrical equipment is efficiently checked, and health and safety meetings are held regularly. Admission and attendance registers are maintained correctly.

- 3.8 Fourteen members of staff are qualified in first aid, four of whom have paediatric training. The school has a well-equipped medical room. Great care is taken to ensure the safety of all pupils being collected at the end of the school day. Pupils are encouraged to establish good eating habits, and to take regular exercise both at playtimes and through sporting activities.
- 3.9 The school has a policy for dealing with the needs of those with physical disabilities that conforms to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 3.10 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) fully implement its policy for child protection [Regulation 3.(2)(b)].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.11 The school has a good partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the wider community, in conformity with its aims. It has established very warm and supportive links with parents, improving on the standard described in the last report.
- 3.12 Parents are strongly supportive of the school. The large majority of those who responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection expressed great satisfaction with the breadth of the curriculum, academic standards, the attention paid to their children, and the worthwhile attitudes and values promoted by the school. Little concern was expressed about any aspect of the school's provision. Parents feel that their contact with teachers and the headmaster is easy, frequent and worthwhile.
- 3.13 The school provides parents with a good level of information, not only by personal contact with the headmaster and teachers at the beginning and ending of the school day, but also on the website and in the regular newsletters. Parents commented that the school's communication with them is regular and fruitful, the twice yearly written reports keeping them in touch with pupils' work and progress. In addition, parents have two consultation evenings each year where they may talk directly to the teaching staff, and many less formal contacts. The Eversfield School Association is an active group providing many opportunities for parents to become involved in school life. Parents are encouraged to support events, concerts and matches. The many social events for parents are well attended.
- 3.14 The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for dealing with complaints. There has been no need for recourse to the full complaints procedure in recent years; less serious concerns are dealt with quickly and informally.
- 3.15 The school has many and varied links with the wider community. A helpful association with two local churches supports both the religious education curriculum and, more generally, the strong Christian ethos of the school, as well as providing venues for the carol service and prize giving. Both the school choir and members of Year 2 perform at homes for the elderly or disadvantaged. The school has linked with the Local Authority to run accelerated learning sessions for local children who are gifted or talented. Recent sessions have involved art, mathematics and science, for example. Local clubs use the sports facilities at weekends and activity clubs operate during holiday periods. Children take seriously their social responsibilities and a thriving charities programme has been very successful in supporting causes at home and abroad.
- 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].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 Governance is good in almost all areas and is directed towards meeting the school's stated aims. The last inspection report stated that governors placed too little focus on standards and quality, and had too little information to gain a clear overview of staff performance. The governing body is now well informed as to the progress of pupils, the standards achieved and the quality of the education offered.
- 4.2 The structure and management arrangements of the governing body are now clearly defined and support effectively its oversight of the school. The main governing body meets regularly and reviews policies. It receives a report on the workings of the child welfare policies annually. Some of these policies were not fully compliant with regulatory requirements during the inspection and have now been appropriately amended. The governors are generally effective in discharging their responsibility for the welfare, health and safety of pupils, although they have not always ensured the full implementation of the child protection policy.
- 4.3 Governors are aware of their financial and educational responsibilities, and work closely with the headmaster and financial manager to ensure that strategic planning is relevant to the school's needs. This includes human and material resources, in line with the aims of the school, fully costed and in an appropriate order of priority.
- 4.4 Relationships between the governors and the senior managers are good. Social meetings with staff and attendance at school functions render governors accessible to parents and staff and assist them in their function to advise, stimulate and support the school's development.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The overall quality of leadership and management is mostly good throughout a wide range of the school's activities, and is effective in overseeing the school's aims of providing a first-class education, building a strong sense of community and developing high moral standards, though regulatory compliance has not been complete. The last report commented on the lack of a school development plan, and on a failure to monitor or evaluate the quality of teachers' and pupils' work, and to ensure that subject co-ordinators fulfilled their role of monitoring standards in their subjects. The school, through hard work, has ensured that matters have been rectified, and leadership and management are fully effective in all these areas.
- 4.6 The headmaster has a very clear vision for the school and is in many ways outstanding in his leadership and motivation of staff. The senior leadership team has worked with him in the production of excellent systems to monitor and evaluate pupils' work, in the introduction of a successful appraisal system for all teaching and non-teaching staff, with target setting appropriate to each person's job description, and with clear goals for improvement in standards across all areas of the curriculum. A school improvement plan has been produced, related to the long- and medium-term planning of subject areas, that points the way forward in a thoughtful and clearly costed fashion, with priorities indicated and delegation of responsibility shown. At every stage, criteria for judging success are listed.
- 4.7 The senior leadership team has been responsible to the governors for drafting a variety of school policies, designed to cover all areas of school activity, which clearly map the path to be followed in pursuance of the school's aims. These policies are regularly reviewed, and

some have been very recently updated, in order to keep them in line with educational practice and statutory obligations.

- 4.8 The school has put in place detailed procedures to recruit, support and motivate staff. These generally work well, with good interviewing procedures, detailed induction processes and continued support from senior pastoral staff. The school is now aware of the correct procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff working with children, though at the time of the inspection some past errors in procedure were noted. All personnel in the school have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) certificates.
- 4.9 The school has a financial manager who works closely with the headmaster and governors to ensure that financial resources are well managed. Resources for learning are good, effectively used and easily accessible. The provision of ICT equipment, both computers and interactive white boards, is particularly good. The friendly and hard-working administrative staff provide effective support. Together with other support staff, they provide high quality service to the school, which thus runs efficiently. The contribution of teaching assistants, particularly but not only with the younger children, is considerable. The catering staff provide a balanced diet of healthy food, and the cleanliness, decoration and maintenance of the buildings are of a high standard.
- 4.10 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out before appointment starts, in particular that a check is completed under section 142 of the 2002 Act, pending the receipt of a CRB certificate [Regulations 4.(2)(a) and (b), 4B.(4)(a) and 4C.(2)(b)].
- 4.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 5].
- 4.12 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 Eversfield Preparatory School has many strong features and is outstanding in some areas. Strong leadership from the headmaster, supported by the effective work of those in senior management positions, enables the school to fulfil its aims successfully and meet the needs of all its pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for whom provision is outstanding. The prevailing ethos of the school, with its emphasis on encouraging pupils' self-confidence, is a major contributory factor in ensuring that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and the educational provision are excellent, as are many aspects of pastoral care and links with parents. Teaching, learning and governance are of high quality, and weaknesses are few. Among these are the range of curricular and extra-curricular challenges offered to more able pupils, and a lack of variety of teaching methods in a small number of subjects and year groups. The school is aware of these areas for development.
- 5.2 The school has responded with great energy and success to the recommendations of the last inspection report. Particular improvement has been made in monitoring, assessment, staff professional development, the range of resources in the library and for ICT, and the role of subject leaders and of the senior leadership team.
- 5.3 The school complies with most of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present meet Standard 3 (the welfare, health and safety of pupils) and, for the same reason, Standard 4 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors).

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school has many strengths and has made very considerable progress in recent years, but in order to improve further it needs to:
1. extend the range of intellectual challenges offered so that more able pupils have further opportunity to develop their thinking skills;
 2. employ across all teaching the diversity of teaching methods seen in the best lessons.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) fully implement its policy for child protection [Regulation 3.(2)(b)] and for the same reason, ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out before appointment starts, in particular that a check is completed under section 142 of the 2002 Act, pending the receipt of a CRB certificate [Regulations 4.(2)(a) and (b), 4B.(4)(a) and 4C.(2)(b)].

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 8th to 11th June 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Jenny McCallum	Reporting Inspector
Mr Alan Laurent	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Margaret Renshaw	Head of Junior School, GSA school
Mrs Lynda Sharpe	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Elaine Willcocks	Pre-Prep Director of Studies, IAPS school