



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ABINGDON HOUSE SCHOOL**

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Abingdon House School

Full Name of School	Abingdon House School
DfE Number	213/6405
Address	Abingdon House School Broadley Terrace London NW1 6LG
Telephone Number	0845 2300426
Email Address	ahs@abingdonhouseschool.co.uk
Head	Mrs Julie Fardell
Chair of Governors	Sir John Ritblat
Age Range	5 to 14
Total Number of Pupils	55
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (46 boys; 9 girls)
Numbers by Age	5-11: 48 11-14: 7
Inspection Dates	21 Jan 2014 to 24 Jan 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in June 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State 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, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors 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.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

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 proprietors, 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 regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Ruth McFarlane

Reporting Inspector

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Team Inspector (Head, ISA/IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Abingdon House is a co-educational day school for pupils who have specific learning difficulties. It was established in 2005. Since the previous inspection, it has moved site within north London and adjusted the age range. There is no longer an Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils up to age 14 are catered for.
- 1.2 As part of the Alpha Plus Group of schools and colleges, its six executive directors carry the responsibilities of governance. Responsibilities for day-to-day governance are delegated to the group's Director of Schools and Director of Teaching and Learning. A new headteacher took up her post in September 2013 and at the same time the senior team was expanded to include a director of studies, who was appointed from the existing staff.
- 1.3 The school aims to offer specialist holistic education and therapy within a safe, caring environment that raises the pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and fosters a sense of pride and belonging. In addition, it aims to encourage pupils to become increasingly independent in a Christian ethos that welcomes pupils of all religions. It aims to enable pupils to return to mainstream education.
- 1.4 Entry to the school is non-selective and based upon the detailed identification of the pupils' individual learning needs, discussions with parents and previous schools and the results of specialist assessments. There are currently 55 pupils: 46 boys and 9 girls. They are taught in various mixed-age combinations depending on their level of development and ability.
- 1.5 All the pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Twenty-eight pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The range of pupils' difficulties is wide and includes dyslexia, dyspraxia, speech and language disorders, fine and gross motor disorders, attention-deficit, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders, autism spectrum disorders and Asperger's Syndrome.
- 1.6 The school does not enter pupils for national tests. The results of diagnostic testing carried out by educational psychologists indicate that the pupils' ability range is wide, but the average ability profile is below the national average overall. Pupils reflect a wide range of backgrounds and cultures but very few speak English as an additional language (EAL). Some travel significant distances to attend the school.
- 1.7 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to the year group of pupils by age. The class nomenclature used by the school and the NC equivalence of age groups included are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Pine	Years 1/2
Lime	Years 2/3
Ash	Years 3/4
Beech	Years 4/5/6
Elm	Years 4/5/6/7
Oak	Years 5/6
Yew	Years 7/8/9

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school thoroughly fulfils its aims to provide a holistic education and to prepare pupils to be ready to return to mainstream education. As a result, the pupils' overall achievement is excellent. Pupils of all ages and abilities are carefully nurtured and their confidence gently restored. This enables their education to be properly developed. Consequently, after a steady start, they make excellent progress over time. Most reach a level of attainment that is broadly in line with expectations for their age by the time they reach Year 9, from starting points that are often two years below what is expected for their age, and sometimes, four years below. Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well because the curriculum is tailored precisely to their individual needs and because they are supported by good teaching in the classroom from a range of specialist therapists and the teaching staff. Training for staff to deal with the full range of difficulties pupils present is underway, but not yet comprehensive. The monitoring of pupils' progress is thorough, through a range of assessment strategies, but the information is not always used well enough to ensure that planning provides pupils with sufficient challenge.
- 2.2 Pupils' excellent personal development is realised through the strong sense of a mutually-supportive community. Pupils of all ages show great concern for one another, reflecting the excellent pastoral care they receive, and the constructive relationships they enjoy. Careful and detailed consideration is given to each individual need. Pupils often come to the school somewhat disillusioned about education. They leave as confident, articulate and courteous young people and they are extremely well prepared to cope with their special difficulties and thus for their return to mainstream education. Views expressed by pupils in responses to the questionnaires were mostly highly positive. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, are good. Omissions in the safeguarding policy noted at the start of the inspection have been fully remedied.
- 2.3 The successful application of the school's aims is reinforced by good governance, leadership and management. Areas for further development have been clearly identified, reflecting the strong commitment to continuous improvement. The governors understand their legal obligations and provide good advice and support to the school. Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not yet robust so that this recommendation of the previous inspection is only partially fulfilled. However, the new team has made an excellent start in putting plans in place to improve this aspect and to streamline the gathering of information about pupils so that staff will know precisely the level of challenge to offer.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets 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. Improve the recording, analysis and communication of assessment data to enable assessment results to inform educational planning more effectively, ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements are high enough.
2. Develop the work already started to ensure that the quality of teaching is robustly monitored to forge improvements.
3. Accelerate the planned programme of additional training to ensure that all staff are kept up to date with the best ways of teaching pupils with the various special educational needs.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The pupils are successfully educated to enable a return to mainstream education in accordance with the school's aims. They demonstrate great perseverance and always do their best to achieve understanding because the adults caring for them take great care to encourage and support them. As a result, from a hesitant start while pupils settle in, progress is excellent over time. Pupils listen to one another attentively. They speak and read with increasing self-assurance. Most pupils are able to write with clarity and use language persuasively, incorporating a developing vocabulary. In mathematics, they soon make rapid progress in applying their emerging knowledge of calculations to the best of their ability. In time, they are able to manipulate numbers and understand mathematical concepts in line with their age.
- 3.3 Pupils can organise themselves well, for instance in researching on the internet and in science investigations. Pupils' powers of reasoning are well developed. They can make cogent arguments to support their views. Pupils' physical talents develop well through a range of off-site experiences and also through an innovative, in-house coordination, sequencing and movement (COSMO) programme. They enjoy school, make good progress, and engage well in extra-curricular activities such as music and arts and crafts and building construction toys.
- 3.4 Pupils make excellent progress, whatever their particular difficulties, because they commit themselves fully to learning. The few more able pupils make the same progress as others. Occasionally, in lessons, the highest rates of progress are not achieved because staff expectations of pupils' capabilities are not always high enough.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be broadly in line with the majority of pupils of their age, by the time they leave the school. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make excellent progress overall compared with others of similar ability. This judgement was confirmed from pupils' individual education plans, which show increasingly difficult targets met, and from the examination of pupils' books, from work seen in lessons, and from curriculum interviews with pupils. Some pupils have gained notable success in local and national association competitions, such as in art and drama.
- 3.6 The majority of pupils make the excellent levels of progress needed to enable them to return to mainstream education in accordance with the school aims, but some continue at the school until the end of Year 9, if this is thought to be the best course of action for the individual.
- 3.7 The pupils behave as well as they can, given their difficulties, in lessons and around the school. They thrive in a positive, calm atmosphere of confidence-building praise. Their enthusiastic attitude to all they undertake at school, and their commitment to working cooperatively with each other, enable them to learn to the very best of their ability. They are acutely aware of their difficulties and how to overcome them. They take pride both in their own achievements and that of others. Most pupils work successfully with others, sharing ideas and providing mutual support.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum is very carefully and individually tailored. It brings together the unique needs of each pupil alongside combining the skills of a committed, multi-disciplinary team of teachers and therapists to develop the potential of each pupil. Great emphasis is placed on activities that help develop pupils' personal skills.
- 3.10 The main focus is on literacy and numeracy and preparing pupils for a return to mainstream education, in accordance with the school's aims. These subjects are taught in ability groups to meet pupils' individual needs. Speaking and listening are given great emphasis, both in the use of speech and language therapists as well as through the opportunities that are embedded in every lesson. The specialist therapists work with pupils alongside teachers in the classroom, giving pupils a high-quality, multi-sensory learning experience. This fully supports the school's aims in providing a holistic approach to teaching its special blend of pupils, whatever their difficulty or ability.
- 3.11 Cross-curricular work is a regular feature. For instance, geography, history and religious education are provided through topic-based, themed learning. There are some excellent resources. Specialist rooms designated for science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and music support these subjects very well. Although most support work takes place in the classrooms, enhancing the strong family-feel and inclusivity of the school, there are welcoming and well-equipped rooms for occupational therapy and speech therapy. Classrooms are well equipped, with individual seat enhancers and writing slopes, for example, which make learning more accessible and comfortable for pupils.
- 3.12 Outdoor space is very limited, but the school takes daily opportunity to use nearby park facilities to provide outdoor space for recreation and sports for every pupil. Pupils speak very enthusiastically about the use of the park and the 'Fit for Sport' programme which promotes the development of coordination, stamina and team spirit. The COSMO programme is another excellent example of the diverse and highly effective physical therapy provided.
- 3.13 Citizenship is included in the excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Pupils are taught to be very sensitive towards one another and their needs, and to prepare thoroughly for life in their next school and how they can best contribute to a democratic society. Careers education is included for the older pupils.
- 3.14 There is a comprehensive programme of clubs and activities that further enhance pupils' learning experiences. Many pupils take up tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing. Drama, Tae Kwan Do, cookery, ICT and arts and crafts are popular and enriching. The school's location, in London, offers an excellent range of experiences linked with the community and supports their learning in class. Pupils recounted their recent day at the Transport Museum with considerable detail and abundant enjoyment.
- 3.15 Curricular planning is good overall. An excellent element is the generous staff-to-pupil ratio that provides numerous opportunities to provide highly focused individual and small group sessions in the classroom. A comprehensive review is underway to with the intention of ensuring that all aspects of planning, delivery and evaluation of the curriculum are excellent.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 Teaching encourages the pupils to work to the best of their abilities. Lessons are carefully planned and, at their best, are well paced and cater for the needs of pupils of all abilities, who often respond with enthusiasm and perseverance.
- 3.18 From a young age, pupils benefit from specialist teaching from therapists and subject specialists. The use of music and science subject specialists, and the active support in the classrooms of occupational and speech and language therapists enables pupils to do their best.
- 3.19 Throughout the school, the consistent management by teachers of pupils' sometimes challenging behaviour is a significant factor in underpinning pupils' highly positive attitudes towards learning and the maintenance of a calm atmosphere. However, not all training has been undertaken to enable staff to deal knowledgeably with all the diverse difficulties that the pupils present.
- 3.20 Lesson planning is good. The wide variety of teaching methods employed enables pupils to learn in their preferred style, fostering their interest and enjoyment. All teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects. The best teaching includes clear learning objectives and clear explanations. It is characterised by good management of time, the employment of a variety of learning activities, a brisk pace, and tasks which match the needs of the pupils. In all teaching there is a very strong ethos of mutual respect and cooperation ensuring that pupils remain 'on task' to help them make the best possible progress. In a small minority of lessons, over-supportive help, due to expectations of what pupils can do not being high enough, prevents pupils from working things out for themselves. Very occasionally, mundane tasks, a slower pace and narrower questioning led to pupils becoming passive and reduced learning.
- 3.21 The teaching meets pupils' differing needs effectively. Individual education plans are produced for every pupil. These are very comprehensive. They are shared with parents and all staff so that all can work in partnership to know and understand the difficulties the pupils face. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are carefully and sensitively met.
- 3.22 A wide range of different assessments and standardised tests give the school plenty of data about pupils' attainment and progress. However, the school is aware that the questions, in some of the tests used for more able pupils, are not hard enough to adequately test their attainment. As a result it cannot be sure that work in class, set in the light of test data, will be hard enough to extend the learning of these pupils to the full. The school is taking steps to simplify and improve its assessment tools.
- 3.23 Resources are used by teachers to good effect although not all use the technologies in the classroom to best effect to support learning. Pupils use ICT well in discrete lessons. Marking and feedback are generally encouraging, although the quality of written comments provided by teachers in response to pupils' work is of variable support. The school has a handwriting policy but there is some inconsistency in its implementation.
- 3.24 Strong, positive relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils feel well supported and able to seek help with their work whenever necessary. Teachers

offer extensive praise and encouragement to the pupils, who appreciate the ways in which staff help them to learn and provide individual support.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal qualities develop exceptionally well, fulfilling the school's aim to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and foster a sense of pride and belonging.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is very strong. When pupils arrive in the school they are often lacking in confidence and self-esteem and have not been happy at school. Pupils develop these qualities very strongly. They demonstrate a clear sense of security in their environment, which enables them to express themselves and feel valued. They show a sincere empathy for the school community. This was well communicated in a whole-school assembly which, led by the children themselves, poignantly teased out the values of fairness and inclusion. Their eager participation and enjoyment in making music and creating artwork show their ready appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.
- 4.4 Pupils acquire and display a strong sense of moral value in their everyday encounters. They discuss what is right and what is not acceptable, with cogent reasoning, showing clear understanding. When asked, during the pupil interviews, about the values the school promotes and their own values, pupils were eloquent in their emphasis upon the principles of fairness, treating people with kindness and doing 'the right thing'. They respect each other and the adults that care for them in school, and they articulate a profound sense of loyalty and mature appreciation about the way the school has helped them through their difficulties.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is particularly strong. The impact of social skills constantly reinforced during lessons is easily observed. The foundation of the school's success lies in the excellent relationships that form quickly inside and outside of the classroom. Pupils readily accept responsibility and contribute to school life. Trained pupil mentors told inspectors how much they relish their opportunities to support younger members of the school community. This is particularly empowering in cases where children have overcome personal difficulties themselves and are able to empathise fully with younger pupils experiencing the same anxieties. Pupils support a number of charities which deepens their understanding and appreciation of the need to support the vulnerable and less fortunate in society.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. Through the topic curriculum comprising religious education, geography and history, pupils develop a wide understanding of faith and culture. Pupils can articulate these differences and relate them to their own experiences. They are fully aware of and appreciate the diverse cultural aspects of living and learning in the capital. They develop very harmonious relationships with each other and show a mature understanding and attitude to each other's difficulties and differences.
- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, pupils' personal development has gained great strides and prepares them very well for their futures.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

- 4.9 Support for pupils is excellent. Extremely detailed individual education plans support all aspects of pupils' pastoral care and academic development. 'Talk time', specialist support and teacher intervention are among the range of strategies that show staff's excellent commitment to the individual, enabling the school to successfully fulfil its pastoral aims.
- 4.10 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are strong. The comprehensive behaviour and anti-bullying policies are implemented well and incidents are very rare. As a result, pupils feel very safe in school. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire the large majority of parents agreed that the school deals well with any cases of bullying. Inspection evidence including, checking of records, and discussions with staff and pupils supported this view. Behaviour is as good as it is, in a school where pupils' difficulties might otherwise cause more serious problems, because pupils firmly believe the school systems are fair. 'Golden Time' for consistent good behaviour is much enjoyed. The 'traffic lights' and 'time out' arrangements are used well to bring any slight lapse back on track.
- 4.11 The school promotes healthy eating and the value of an active lifestyle. Pupils enjoy daily exercise. An excellent range of balanced and nutritious food is available. The school uses tasting sessions to great effect to promote the engagement of a significant number of pupils who have sensory issues around eating.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 Pupils' and parents' questionnaire responses mostly reflected the very strong view that pupils are happy in their environment and form strong bonds with the staff. Pupils report that the school listens to them and makes them feel valued.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 Efficient implementation of detailed policies and procedures ensures that pupils are safeguarded well and their individual needs fully met, although several adjustments were needed to the safeguarding policy during the inspection in order for it to comply with requirements.
- 4.16 Staff are aware of their responsibilities, have undertaken child protection training, and update such training with the required regularity. Senior staff and governors with designated responsibility for child protection update their training every two years and ensure that all staff are trained at the correct time. Safer recruitment procedures for new staff are followed.
- 4.17 The school takes careful and thorough steps to ensure that health and safety procedures are adhered to. Equipment and appliances are tested at suitable intervals and maintenance records are kept efficiently. Detailed risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school, including those for visits away from the school. Effective measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, and staff are trained in fire prevention and control procedures. Fire drills are carried out regularly and are well documented and efficiently recorded.
- 4.18 Arrangements for injured or sick pupils are sound. Many staff are trained in first aid. The administration of treatment and medication is clearly recorded and parents are appropriately informed. Staff are very well informed about pupils' individual

conditions and needs, but the provision for those who are unwell during the school day is currently limited.

- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are accurately and thoroughly maintained and securely stored for future reference.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The executive directors provide effective and efficient oversight of the school and demonstrate an excellent understanding of its systems and structures and how it is meeting its aims. The first-hand input from two of the directors provides strong support that is in some aspects excellent.
- 5.3 Those with responsibilities for governance are thorough in undertaking their responsibilities for financial control and for the provision of staff, resources and premises and accommodation. Their support is demonstrated by the successful move to new premises since the previous inspection. Governors promote the school's continuing success and the maintaining of pupils' high levels of academic progress, personal development and pastoral care by robustly monitoring the education provided and standards reached through visits and reports.
- 5.4 Governors are generally effective in discharging their responsibilities. Governors regularly scrutinise procedures, for instance, for child protection and health and safety, through meetings with staff, and the whole governing body contributes to an annual review of the child protection policy. However there were a number of required elements omitted from the child protection policy at the start of the inspection, and some anomalies in the centralised staff register, which were corrected by the end of the inspection.
- 5.5 Governors provide critical support for the head and a valuable knowledge of the local context in which the school operates. They attend formal occasions and special events and this enhances their understanding of the school. Governors have a good overall insight into the quality of teaching and learning and the personal development of pupils. The process of recording and evaluating the effectiveness of almost all of the school's policies and procedures is rigorous.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.7 The educational experience provided and pupils' excellent achievement and personal development demonstrate that the school's leadership understands the needs of all its pupils. Leadership is responsive and thoughtful, whilst offering a very clear sense of purpose and direction.
- 5.8 The mostly new senior leadership is committed and enthusiastic and reflects the school's commitment to appoint, develop and retain a dedicated and high-quality staff to support all aspects of school life. Many of the staff are new. They are enthusiastically embracing their responsibilities. The arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are effective. Appropriate checks on the suitability of staff, supply staff and governors to work with children are undertaken, and a central register of staff is maintained.

- 5.9 Leaders' clear direction has helped to create an open, consultative and dynamic style of leadership which has stimulated improvements. A number of new initiatives are linked to systematic appraisal and professional development. All staff new to the school receive effective general induction and engage in suitable training for their roles and responsibilities which includes safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Training in safeguarding children is particularly thorough and care is taken to ensure that it meets requirements. Although several aspects of relevant special educational needs training have been undertaken, including that for autism spectrum disorder, sensory integration and specific learning difficulties, not all the various special difficulties the pupils present have been covered so that some staff are not sure how they should deal with pupils. However, there are always staff present who are experienced and appropriately trained, and a detailed programme of further training is already planned.
- 5.10 School administration systems are cohesive and efficiently organised. Key policies, including those for health and safety, safeguarding and child protection are regularly monitored and updated, as required, by senior staff. Self-evaluation and development planning have been used well since the previous inspection and enable staff at all levels to identify where the school is strong and where improvement is necessary. It is early days for the new senior team but improved strategies for assessment are already underway to deal with identified weakness.
- 5.11 The school has responded to recommendations made in the previous inspection by developing the formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and it is beginning to rationalise and reform and simplify the systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' work. However, this work is at an early stage and therefore not fully effective in enabling teaching to improve or information about pupils' progress to be used readily in the classroom to ensure teachers' expectations are high enough.
- 5.12 The school has a strong relationship with parents. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of parents expressed appreciation of the educational provision, care and the support that their children received. Some concerns were expressed about the lack of outdoor facilities and others about communication. Inspectors judged that the school makes the best provision it can to compensate for the limited outdoor space at the site and pupils have good opportunities to develop physically. They judged that communication with parents, through newsletters, email and regular formal and informal visits, is effective. The head is readily available at start and end of the school day and staff are accessible via email.
- 5.13 Prospective and current parents are provided with appropriate information regarding the day-to-day running and organisation of the school. Parent workshops take place termly which provide them with an insight into the roles of specialist teachers or an opportunity to discuss issues pertinent to the school community. Parents receive regular reports on progress and are assisted during their child's transition to their next school. The individual education plans are shared fully with parents, to enable them to understand the school's plans for their child.
- 5.14 A strong parents' committee supports a number of important events in the school calendar, ensuring that parents are invited to be involved in school life. Parents are welcomed into school on a daily basis, bringing their children in and settling them into class. This enables frequent and valuable communication between home and school. There is a clear complaints procedure in place and records show that the few concerns are dealt with thoughtfully and in line with procedures.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.