

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools belonging to Cognita

INSPECTION REPORT

INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO BSO STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Name of school:	Hastings School
Address:	28036 Madrid Spain
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Simon Bennett Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Eileen McAndrew Dr Martin Bradley
Dates of inspection:	5 to 8 November 2012

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Hastings School

Addresses of school:

Early Years: Paseo de la Habana, 204
28036 Madrid
Spain
Telephone number: 91 359 06 21
Fax number: 91 359 35 21

Primary School: C/ Bendición de Campos, 5
28036 Madrid
Spain
Telephone number: 91 010 70 62
Fax number: 91 230 63 03

Secondary School: C/ Azulinas, 8
28036 Madrid
Spain
Telephone number: 91 359 99 13
Fax number: 91 359 35 21

Email address: info@hastingssschool.com

Proprietor: Cognita

Name of Principal: Mr David Morrison
Head of Secondary School: Mr Kevin Godden
Head of Primary School: Mrs Christine Curtis

Type of school: Independent

Age range of pupils/students: 1 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Total number of pupils on roll:
(Primary) Boys: 127 Girls: 131
(Early Years and Reception) Boys: 67 Girls: 86
Number of Secondary students: Boys: 81 Girls: 107

Type of inspection: British Schools Overseas

Inspection Team:

Reporting Inspector: Mr Simon Bennett
Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Eileen McAndrew
Dr Martin Bradley

Dates of inspection: 5 to 8 November 2012

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with the standards and requirements of the British Schools Overseas (BSO), and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted. It was conducted by independent professional inspectors, who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current requirements. The professional inspectors looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos and reported on these to the school.

Information about the school:

Hastings School was established by Mrs Pennefather in 1971. She was a New Zealander who set up a small family school and chose Hastings as a particularly English name. During the following years the school grew so that IGCSE and then A Level were introduced. In 1995 Juan Pedro Gonzalez took the school over from his mother, initially as Administrator and later as General Manager. Two years ago the school was acquired by Cognita and since then a new Primary School building has been added. Last year 130 students enrolled in Pre-Nursery to Grade 3. There are plans to enlarge the school. Hastings School thus comprises three separate buildings - Early Years (Paseo de la Habana), Primary (Bendición) and Secondary (Azulinas).

The school offers the Spanish curriculum through to university entrance with Spanish language and social studies to Year 11. In Years 12 and 13 a Hastings student may opt to study both Spanish and A Level University entrance. Spanish is offered in the Primary School from Year 1, and special help is given in English for non-English speakers in early Primary.

The school places great emphasis on the sense of family allied to academic excellence. It wishes to ensure that the family context of the school will be preserved as it grows.

Summary of main findings:

Hastings School offers a good education in accordance with its aim to its 597 pupils spanning the age of one to eighteen on three different sites. Since its acquisition by Cognita, and more particularly since the appointment of its first principal in 2012, there has been a determined effort to develop and implement the concept of one school offering an education of high quality across the age range. The management of the school has been involved in detailed analysis of the areas of the school which would benefit from attention, while building on the considerable strengths and several areas of excellence already in place. The school, under its recently appointed principal, has embarked upon a policy of increased engagement with staff and pupils alike to build further upon the clear strengths of the school and to offer many more opportunities to the whole school community, including parents, to take increased responsibility for its development. Important and well considered initiatives have included addressing issues of transition across the phases and

induction in order to ensure that movement between the settings is as positive and fulfilling an experience as possible. Great emphasis has been put on extending the opportunities for staff to take more specific responsibilities, and particular initiatives have been offered to students through the student Council and the Gold class awards. High on the list of systems already in effective operation are the appraisal procedures for staff and assessment for learning, with which several departments have engaged enthusiastically. The school's academic results are good. Teaching is good overall, with areas of real excellence. Music and art are of high quality, and provision in the Early Years is exceptionally well planned. Leadership of Special Educational Needs is a strength of the school, although its impact is constrained by its part-time nature, and this is the case for careers advice as well.

Throughout the school, pupils are very well cared for and describe their pleasure of being members of a family community.

The curriculum offers pupils of all ages a valuable education, but there are limitations of choice. The school's management is determined to ensure that two-way communication with parents on a regular basis is further facilitated and strengthened, and that has been evident in the bulletins and newsletters from the Principal.

What the school does well:

- The Primary School develops pupils' competence in English very well and the fruits of this are evident throughout the school.
- The school's provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs is coordinated most effectively.
- From the youngest classes upwards, pupils' personal and social development is fostered extremely well.
- Pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are of high quality.
- The school has a strong work ethic.

What the school must do to comply with standards:

- Fulfil its obligation to provide adequate facilities for pupils who are ill, both in the Primary and Secondary schools.
- Further strengthen specific aspects of communication with parents.

Recommendations:

1. Review the Primary School curriculum and take further a similar process in the Secondary School.
2. Devise an appropriate management structure for the Primary School and Early Years.
3. Plan more opportunities for pupils in the Primary School to develop their curriculum through enabling them to increase their competency in writing at length.

4. Ensure that the many initiatives underway in the Secondary School, such as the new middle management structure, new appraisal procedures and strengthened communications with parents, are implemented consistently and reviewed accordingly.
5. Strengthen the links between the Primary and Secondary schools to facilitate greater benefits to pupils and the school as a whole in the process of transition and induction.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

Part 1a – Secondary School

The quality of the curriculum:

The school meets all of the standards relevant to the curriculum. The curriculum enables pupils to enter or re-enter the UK educational system at an appropriate level. The school's policy and its implementation enable pupils to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. Currently, the school's curriculum, both at Primary and Secondary level, is under scrutiny and review. Current provision in the Secondary offers English Literature, history, art and design, chemistry, biology, physics, applied ICT, Spanish, French, mathematics and further mathematics, and economics and business at AS and A Level. There is no provision for geography at this level. Pupils expressed their interest in being able to access drama and media studies.

At IGCSE the school offers English Language, English Literature, mathematics, coordinated science, French and Spanish, with optional subjects to be picked from business studies, art and design, ICT, or history or geography. Additionally, a proportion of the timetable is devoted in Years 10 and 11 to courses in Spanish Language, Literature, history and geography. Students' British School Studies are validated at the end of Year 11 by passes in these four subjects in addition to a minimum of four IGCSE grades at A* to C. The curriculum offers the essential elements of the National Curriculum for England. Furthermore, a range of extra-curricular activities is offered by mostly Primary teachers on a voluntary basis. The curriculum is supplemented by the provision of music, PE, and PSHE throughout the school. Much of the PSHE is both beneficial and effective, but there is unevenness in the planning and inconsistency in its delivery. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, many of which make an additional contribution to PSHE and to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).

The quality of teaching and assessment:

Teaching across the school is good, and a quarter of lessons seen in a range of subjects and across the year groups of schools were outstanding. All the standards applicable to teaching area met. Pupils make good progress in lessons and relationships between pupils and staff are good. Standards of literacy in the Secondary School are high; word work and emphasis in vocabulary are a regular part of every lesson. Planning is thorough and usually recognises the needs and challenges of individual pupils, and attention to a balance between focus and variety is an accepted part of this. In the best lessons, pupils are fully, and at times creatively, involved in enquiry and the working towards a solution. Plenary sessions strengthen this process. Again, the teachers work hard to involve all pupils, but in the best lessons space is provided for pupils to think more deeply and develop their responses. Subject knowledge is good and teachers convey their enthusiasm for their subjects. In the Spanish curriculum the department has worked hard to develop in all subjects, more interaction and engagement with the students and evidence from the lessons seen indicate considerable success in this respect. Again,

enthusiasm is the key note. Pupils appreciate the engagement with their teachers and participate readily in debate. Classroom management is good.

Department schemes of work are detailed, and Heads of Departments work hard within the limited time available to share ideas and issues with their subject colleagues. The increased process of appraisal is helping staff focus on classroom performance and practice. The concern to involve pupils in their learning and understanding bears fruit across the curriculum. The work ethic of the pupils is strong and it is the staff's commitment that is the key to this. Classes are often large, and staff manage relatively limited space imaginatively but safely.

Assessment in the Secondary School is generally good. Results at externally validated exams are a reflection of this. Pupils know what progress they are making and in subjects, for instance, notably Art, Science and English, correction is of high quality, both supportive and diagnostic. In the best instances, there is real dialogue between pupils and teachers. Assessment for learning has been developed strongly across the departments and the best serve as a model of good practice for others. Plenaries in class, evaluating areas of difficulty or positive learning experiences, were used to good effect; self-evaluation and peer review were implemented effectively, and the frequency of reporting to parents and grades for students has been considerably and beneficially increased. The school has introduced during this academic year teaching and assessment systems for both Primary and Secondary. In class, success criteria are an important part of every lesson and are followed up effectively.

Part 1b – Primary School

The quality of the curriculum:

The curriculum in the primary school is satisfactory covering all the required areas of the National Curriculum with the addition of Spanish, and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

The school has worked methodically and effectively with a long established curriculum to ensure appropriate provision for pupils of all ages and abilities. The allocation of time to subjects has been carefully considered to give a reasonable balance across the curriculum, though the curricula in foundation subjects such as history and geography are constrained by the limited time available. Aspects of PSHE are planned through the scheme of work and explored in circle time and assemblies, contributing significantly to pupils' very good development in this area.

The curriculum policy is supported by common planning structures at both key stages contributing to a progressive learning experience for all pupils. These planning structures have provided effective support to curriculum continuity during the school's recent expansion. Planning at all levels has been methodically developed building on the good foundations developed in the Early Years. Long term planning consists of an overview of each subject of the curriculum across the year and a curriculum map for provision in each year group. These give teachers essential information about the topics covered in pupils' previous learning and provides the starting point for current planning. The National Literacy Framework provides a specific and progressive scheme of work for English from which teachers plan very effectively. Mathematics is supported through a published programme based on the National Curriculum. Schemes of work for each foundation subject specify which topics will be taught in each year group and from these individual

teachers devise weekly planning. This short term planning clarifies in greater detail how the topic will be taught and the activities chosen. Although the curriculum has been updated from time to time, the basic structure has remained the same and some aspects, such as the specific topics in some subjects, serve rather to constrain than to encourage, more imaginative provision. These creative elements are evident in some aspects of teaching but are not sufficiently explored in the whole curriculum. The school is aware that it would be timely to review the curriculum.

Almost all pupils are working in their second language so the acquisition fluency in English is of paramount importance. Literacy and mathematics are rightly accorded a high priority in both Key Stages and as a result pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening and good progress in mathematics.

Pupils' aesthetic and creative development is enriched through the very good curriculum in music. The school works hard to provide for pupils' physical development despite the limitations of indoor and outdoor space and has recently created facilities for food technology. Curriculum provision is extended and enriched by lunchtime and after school clubs including Yoga, Chinese, origami, keyboard, drama and sport.

Throughout the schools provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is of extremely high quality. It is very effectively organised. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has developed clear policies and practices which take full account of current British developments and which provide high quality early intervention which is greatly valued by the parents. There is a clear referral system through the heads of the primary and secondary departments and an appropriately wide range of assessments and test are used. A clear distinction is made between pupils with behaviour issues and those with learning difficulties. This has led to teachers becoming much more effective at providing differentiated work within classes for pupils with varying needs and attainment.

Individual Learning Plans are precise and used effectively for support whether in class or through withdrawal for individual or small group work. Pupils in Year 9 and above are considered for additional time in examinations and are appropriately assessed where necessary. The coordinator has good links with specialist SEN providers in Madrid and this enables parents who wish to follow the Spanish system of referral and support to do so. Pupils who are identified as gifted or talented have some extended provision through differentiated tasks in lessons, but this is an area for continuing development.

The quality of teaching and assessment:

The quality of teaching in the primary school is good and occasionally outstanding, resulting in commensurate progress by pupils. Teachers plan lessons effectively, taking account of prior assessments and their knowledge of individual pupils. They identify what is to be learned and make this explicit to pupils through the consistent use of the *We Are Learning To (WALT)* strategy, helping all pupils to understand what they are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson. Lessons are well structured and make effective use of the available time. As a consequence, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

In the majority of lessons the tasks set challenge pupils of all abilities to participate fully, using their existing knowledge and skills to help them acquire new learning. Teachers' close knowledge of individual pupils' capabilities results in good quality questioning helping to ensure that pupils refine and extend their learning. A significant strength in teaching is the attention with which teachers develop and foster pupils' self-confidence by encouraging them not to be afraid of making mistakes and by showing them how to learn from those errors. This was particularly evident in some mathematics lessons. Some teachers are adept at including links to other related areas of learning, broadening pupils' knowledge and helping them to understand how one area of learning supports and extends another. School policies encourage this aspect but it is not yet widespread.

Although teaching is generally good, some common limitations are apparent. Almost all lessons follow the same approach with teacher led instruction and teacher set task. Teaching guidance draws attention to the need to take account of pupils' differing learning styles and plan for a variety of classroom approaches, but these are under developed.

All pupils have frequent opportunities to work in pairs and groups cooperating and collaborating in their learning. In discussion with inspectors pupils said they love school and in class they are motivated and prepared to try hard. Their positive, enthusiastic attitudes are the result of teachers establishing good routines, making their expectations clear and planning effective support for groups and individuals. Teaching assistants are very well briefed and skilled in their approach to the support they provide, contributing significantly to the progress and achievement of pupils. They are lively and enthusiastic learners who enjoy their work and take satisfaction from their achievement. Pupils' good behaviour contributes to the brisk pace of lessons and to their good rate of progress.

Teachers show sensitivity and skill in developing, refining and extending pupils' competence in speaking and listening and in consequence, pupils become increasingly confident speakers, eager to express a view, or explain what they think to others. Pupils' achievement in writing lags behind their attainment in other aspects of literacy. The standard of their handwriting and presentation is too variable across the Key Stages. Too few opportunities are planned for pupils to use their increasing literacy skills to write at length across the curriculum for a variety of purposes and for different audiences. In the same way, there is an overuse of published worksheets in some areas. These materials often restrict the scope for pupils to demonstrate precisely what they know and understand.

The coordinators for both Key Stages support and critically advise teachers on planning contributing effectively to the overall quality of planning and to its consistency through the school. The critical annotation of weekly planning is a promising initiative which helps to ensure subsequent provision is more precisely targeted for individual pupils and the class. They also make informal drop in visits to class to add to the peer observations which have been introduced. The coordinators have no formally delegated authority in relation to the monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning.

Assessment procedures are well established and improvement is continuing as *Assessment for Learning (AfL)* is refined and embedded. Teachers' marking is generally methodical and regular, supported by the feedback and marking policy. Where marking is most effective pupils are given a clear indication of what they have

done well and their attention drawn to what they need to do to improve. The tone of these comments is affirming and encouraging. Teachers and pupils identify success criteria for each lesson so that at the end of the session, pupils can focus attention more precisely what they have learned and how well they understand. Consistent and effective use is made in lessons of the school's colour coded system to help pupils assess their own progress and identify where they need support. In the best practice, teachers and support staff were swift to note the pupils' assessments and took account of them in subsequent planning.

Pupils' attainment in phonics, English and mathematics is regularly tested using the levels of attainment in the National Curriculum. The optional SATs are carried out annually in the core subjects at Key Stage 2, building into a record of attainment over time for each pupil. The school has developed a basic tracking system which provided a useful record of progress but which is now recognised to be of limited use. The school has recently adopted a standardised assessment and tracking programme Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) which will assess each pupil in aspects of English and in mathematics from the Nursery to Year 6. The programme will provide externally validated test results and will also identify pupils who are underperforming or who exceed their predicted levels of attainment.

The school meets the required standards.

PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is strong throughout the school. The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence without arrogance. Increasingly, pupils throughout the school and through the student Council are being given opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to community life. The student body is drawn from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds, and the pupils work and play harmoniously together. The questionnaires completed by the students in the Secondary School before the inspection displayed a healthy candour and directness. Some of the issues they raised concerning such matters as the security of their property have already been noted and addressed. An area of concern for a considerable proportion of students is the availability of advice for IGCSE choices, and further up the school for guidance on A/AS Level and options for university. The PSHE programme is largely helpful in raising awareness about personal and social issues, but requires greater consistency in delivery and an increased focus on its monitoring in order for it to achieve its full impact. Pupils' behaviour and courtesy to others around the school is of high quality, and their willingness to contribute to the school's development is being carefully realised. Pupils are aware of the world outside school, and this is helpfully strengthened through the curriculum. They are involved in a range of charitable initiatives and participate enthusiastically in Drama within class and beyond. This is supplemented by music throughout the school and by art of exceptionally sensitive and high quality. Visits out of school are extensive and wide-ranging. Pupils respond positively in relation to the pastoral care they receive, their access to support, and their feeling of safety within the school community.

The school meets the required standards.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Pastoral care is very good, at times outstanding, and pupils feel safe and well looked after. The child protection policy and procedures are in place and meet the requirements of the Spanish authorities. However, the recently reviewed policy does not have regard to the latest DfE guidance *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007)*. There is one lead Child Protection Officer supported by named designated officers on each site. All have received recent training. The lead officer is fully aware of the local procedures and contact details for responsible agencies. Some, but not all, staff have received child protection training. It is imperative to ensure that all members of staff receive training at an appropriate level as soon as possible.

Effective anti-bullying procedures are in place. Pupils said in discussion with inspectors that there was no bullying in school, but should it occur both older and younger pupils knew what to do and were confident the matter would be swiftly addressed. The policy supporting visits out of school is comprehensive and risk assessments are rigorously carried out.

Fire safety is carefully considered following the requirements of the local Fire Authority. Fire risk assessments are carried out and fire-fighting equipment is checked annually and maintained by specialist providers. All staff are due to receive fire-safety training in December of this year. The First-aid policy is supported by qualified members of staff. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy in accordance with local requirements. This usefully covers all aspects of safety regulation for the protection of staff including: risk-assessment and management, accident prevention, safety precautions, medical checks and emergency plans. In addition, both Secondary and Primary schools have shorter health and safety policies.

Aspects of nutrition, healthy eating and developing a healthy life-style are explored in science and PSHE in the Primary School and are integral to the secondary school curriculum. As they progress through the school they become increasingly aware of the dangers to health from the misuse of alcohol and drugs. Pupils understand that exercise is an important part of healthy living and in discussions with inspectors said they enjoy provision for physical education (PE) and games.

The admissions and attendance registers comply fully with regulations.

The school meets the required standards.

PART 4 - Suitability of the proprietors and staff

The school and Cognita have been meticulous in ensuring that all appropriate checks have been carried out on all staff, and the Central Register of appointments is extremely detailed and clear. All the records are filed and securely stored in the School Manager's office, and he has a strong grasp of what is necessary. In UK, additional columns on the spreadsheet would indicate when such records as qualifications or the CRB were seen and the signature of the authoriser would be provided. Cognita's Spanish office needs to be aware of this. All the checks required by the Spanish authorities are in place, and ultimate responsibility for oversight of the school lies with Cognita's Spanish office.

The school meets the required standards.

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school occupies three buildings close to one another in Madrid. Just over a year ago a new Primary building was bought by the school proprietors; the other two buildings are owned by the former proprietors. The three premises are occupied by the Early Years' classes, the Primary School and the Secondary School, respectively. In addition, nearby facilities at a university site are used by the pupils for football and basketball, and also a park is used for football.

The school meets all the UK regulatory requirements except one. Spanish requirements regarding the premises are all satisfied. The provision for pupils who are unwell in the Primary School is a folding bed in a corner of the hall and that in the Secondary School is a similar bed in the secretary's office. Neither is close to toilets or has access to a dedicated wash basin.

At all three sites the rooms are of an adequate size for the groups seen. Maintenance and decoration are good and are supported by good displays, which generally include pupils' work. Flooring is in good condition, except outside the Secondary careers room where it is unstable.

Premises are well-maintained and decorated. At the Early Years' and Primary sites the outside play areas are well decorated to support activities. At all sites the outdoor areas are secure and can be used safely by the pupils.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the standards fully?

Ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are, or become, ill (*paragraph 5.13*).

PART 6 - The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets the great majority of the UK regulatory requirements. It meets the Spanish requirements. The school provides a good range of information to parents, although much of this is in emails sent by different staff, rather than in a regular newsletter.

The information regarding school policies, performance and staffing is mainly on the website. At present there is no one person responsible for collecting information for the website and the school has acknowledged that some information and the chance to publicise forthcoming events has risked not appearing. In particular, the academic performance during the last school year, including the results of public examinations, have not been made available, nor have the number of staff, including a summary of their qualifications wherever practicable. The website includes a number of school policies and states that others are available at the school, but does not give a list of these to support enquiries. Considerable steps have been taken recently to develop the website and the school is aware that this good work should continue.

Parents are provided with regular reports; these are twice-yearly in the Primary and Early Years' departments. The Secondary School has recently moved to termly reports with half-termly grade sheets which also have a grade for leadership qualities.

What does the school need to do in order to meet the standards fully?

Ensure that the website includes particulars of academic performance during the last year (*paragraph 6.9*), and

Provide details of the number of staff employed at the school and a summary of their qualifications (*paragraph 6.11*).

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school has a written complaints policy which is available to parents. This exceeds the local requirement since no such policy is necessary for an independent school. The policy reflects that of Cognita but does not comply with the standards in England.

There is no requirement from the Spanish authorities for this policy.

PART 8 - The overall quality and standards of the Early Years' provision

The overall quality and standards of the Early Years' provision is good with several outstanding aspects. Children can enter the Pre-Nursery classes before their second birthday and move to the Nursery before their third birthday. They can then go on to the Reception classes a year later. The relatively young ages in the classes is due to admissions being related to the English academic year beginning in September whilst the Spanish academic year, which determines eligibility for entry, begins the following January.

Children make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points. The school places a strong emphasis on social and emotional development, along with spoken English; these are strengths of the provision. The children settle quickly into the Pre-Nursery, and understand and follow the routines. They become increasingly confident when talking in English, and work and play well with others. Provision for learning and care meets the needs of the full range of children very effectively. The SENCO provides sensitive support when needed. She can draw upon the advice of Spanish Educational Psychologists and other local professionals if required. The school fully meets the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare. The recent change in Early Years' leadership, providing more time for the coordination role, has had a major and positive impact upon planning and assessment which now demonstrate particularly good practice. The changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum from 1 September 2012 are being embedded in staff planning and assessment. Extremely good records are developing. The staff have enthusiastically welcomed the revised structure of the EYFS and the school's approach to linking planning to targets and outcomes, commenting that it is straightforward and clear. The planning and record keeping used from the youngest classes is integrated into a document which by the age of five informs the Foundation Stage Profile and greatly assists reporting to parents. An

assessment record for two year olds is also newly in place. This is a clear and appropriate document which combines written statements on the child's development with photographic evidence. The new documentation and processes have been linked to staff development, including well targeted and monitored support for individuals as required. The revisions have yet to be fully worked through, but current practice is particularly good.

The children are supported effectively to acquire the skills to develop and learn. The staff have high expectations of the children and are able in most cases to engage them in activities as well as enabling them to begin to develop positive learning attitudes. In the Pre-Nursery the children come to understand the pattern of the day and the staff carefully encourage them to use social skills in their play and when listening to stories. At meal and snack times they are able to sit appropriately at the table and share the food. In the Nursery they begin to learn some sounds, such as those at the beginning of names, and their knowledge and use of English develops. The children continue to be supported in acquiring cooperative skills in their play and learning, and increasingly work well together. In the Reception classes early reading and writing skills are carefully developed, recognising that many of the children are still relatively young for such work. Speaking and listening skills are supported well. A significant feature of teachers' planning is that classes with the same year-groups work together to ensure that the children gain similar experiences and that resources are used to best effect. In the great majority of classes the activities, including action rhymes and songs, are well matched to the capabilities of the children. However, in a minority the match is less successful and the children have difficulty in reproducing the teacher's actions.

Links with parents are promoted well, with meetings to discuss the school's work and information being provided on class activities as well as individuals' progress. Planning for the contribution of the Early Years to the school's website is well advanced and the current Development Plan for Early Years includes reviews of home-school links books, termly parent information books and ways of extending more frequent communications with parents. Written reports of good quality are provided twice a year.

The staff recognise the need to ensure that the children are able to feel emotionally secure and can form appropriate bonds and attachments with their carers. They encourage the children to be happy, to learn to behave well and to play cooperatively, as well as developing independence. The school is promoting the awareness and skills of all staff, including teaching assistants, to support children's independent and imaginative learning. Healthy eating is encouraged along with an awareness of the value of physical exercise. Staff are reviewing the outdoor provision and clear targets with dates have been set for this. Transitions from one class to the next and into the Primary School are well managed.

The leadership and management of the Early Years is outstanding. The coordinator has a reduced teaching commitment this year and this change from teaching full-time has been of considerable benefit to the school. She has reviewed planning and assessment along with many policies, introducing the revised EYFS extremely effectively. The Development Plan, devised for the start of the current academic year, is a most valuable document and is well organised with practical targets and achievable dates. The overview taken includes safeguarding practices, implementing these with up-to-date risk assessments. There are rigorous systems for self-evaluation, and the coordinator closely monitors teachers' planning. Staff training is

wide-ranging and focused on identified needs. This assists good performance management. The overall management of the Early Years remains the responsibility of the Head of Primary, although she now works on a separate site and inevitably has less regular day-to-day contact with the Early Years. There remains a need to clarify some management arrangements, as a result of the move to a separate Primary site, and the school is aware of this.

The school meets the required standards.

PART 9 – Leadership and management of the school

All the standards in this section are met. Clear educational direction is currently provided, and this is having an impact in raising further the quality of education and the care of the pupils. All parts of the school have high quality staff and committed leaders. Financial management is robust, and management has been successful in identifying priorities for improvements and is in the process of implementing decisions effectively. The management of the school is providing much increased opportunity for more regular staff appraisal, and this process is being re-defined. The school is very well run and works most effectively in terms of routines. Attendance of the pupils at school is exceptionally good, and closely monitored. Support staff and secretaries are extremely courteous and helpful, and the buildings are well-maintained.

The school meets the required standards.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.