



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HALLFIELD SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hallfield School

Full Name of School	<b>Hallfield School</b>
DCSF Number	<b>330/6004</b>
EYFS Number	<b>257164</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>528956</b>
Address	<b>48 Church Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 3SJ</b>
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Fax Number	<b>0121 4549182</b>
Email Address	<b>office@hallfieldschool.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr John Shackleton</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Keith Uff</b>
Age Range	<b>0 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>562</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (363 boys; 199 girls;)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 129    5-11: 317 3-5 (EYFS): 116    11-18: N/A</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Linda Pain</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection date/EYFS	<b>25 Jan 2010 to 26 Jan 2010</b>
Final team visit	<b>22 Feb 2010 to 24 Feb 2010</b>

## PREFACE

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

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

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

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

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

The inspection 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. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1879 as a Church of England boys' school, Hallfield School has occupied its 20-acre Edgbaston site since 1936. In welcoming pupils of differing faiths and cultural traditions, it reflects the diverse society of modern Birmingham. Following the admission of girls in 1995, Hallfield is now a fully co-educational day school for pupils aged from 3 months to eleven years of age. Since the last inspection in 2006, a purpose-built nursery has been established. Further investment has led to the creation of an outdoor play area for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and an art and technology room for Years 1 and 2. The school functions as a whole school with two main sections, the nursery and pre-preparatory department for pupils aged 3 months to 7 years old and the upper school for pupils of 7 to 11. Out of school care is available from 8.00 am and after school care until 6.00 pm each day. The headmaster has been in post since September 2007.
- 1.2 Hallfield's mission is to be a leading school of its age range in the Birmingham area. The school's primary aim is to educate for excellence in academic, sporting, cultural, social and personal development within a stimulating and happy environment. It seeks to promote Christian values, to insist on the highest standards of courtesy, honesty, and respect for others and to foster close and supportive home/school relationships.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 562 pupils were on roll (363 boys and 199 girls). Of these, 245 children were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and forty-five boys and thirty-seven girls attended the Nursery part-time. Pupils entering the Nursery have a broad range of ability, assessed informally. Entry to the pre-preparatory and then the upper school is not automatic. At these stages, and at older ages for pupils new to the school, formal assessments are used to judge pupils' abilities. The school does not enter pupils for national tests at 7 and 11 but through a variety of standardised tests, pupils' ability overall is judged to be above the national average. A number of assisted places in the school are available annually.
- 1.4 Of the nine pupils identified as requiring support with their learning, eight receive specialist help. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and no pupils receive help with the development of their English skills.
- 1.5 The majority of the school's leavers from Year 6 transfer to selective secondary education, most achieving their first choice school and many gaining academic awards.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used in the Early Years and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence is shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Hallfield First	Nursery
Transition	Nursery
Foundation	Nursery
Reception	Reception

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards most pupils attain high standards in their learning and achievement. In Years 1-6 a balanced, structured and stimulating curriculum provides access and opportunities, both in and out of the classroom, although drama is not included for all year groups. The best teaching has high expectations and stimulates and encourages many aspects of pupils' intellectual, physical and creative development. Talents both inside and outside lessons are encouraged and nurtured through the extensive activities programme. Pupils' behaviour is of a consistently high standard. Their attitude to work is commendable. A relaxed yet respectful relationship between pupils and staff allows them to share the common goals of a joy of learning and looking to do their best, whatever the task. Good learning habits are encouraged and pupils understand the need to take responsibility for their own development
- 2.2 The quality of the pastoral care and the attention given to the welfare of pupils is excellent. Measures and procedures to safeguard and promote the health and safety and welfare of the pupils are comprehensive. Co-operation and courtesy are evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils are willing to express their own views and respect the views of others. They work successfully together, collaborating and encouraging each other. Pupils offer themselves for election to the school council. They are encouraged to consider world issues and to develop an understanding of the needs of people in other countries and those less fortunate. Charity events continue throughout the year and closely involve pupils, parents and staff.
- 2.3 Governance is good and serves the school well. They offer a wide range of experience and expertise and their work has enabled the formulation of a comprehensive business and development plan. The governing body has, however, been less rigorous in ensuring that recruiting procedures have been correctly followed and now appreciate the need to take responsibility for overseeing day-to-day issues, such as procedures for dealing with child protection and safer recruitment. Leadership and management are good. Senior managers work well together. They have a clear vision for the school and recent policy reviews are robust. Heads of department roles are now being extended to include the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires completed by parents and pupils were overwhelmingly positive.

## 2.(b) Action points

### (i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended, and therefore it was required to:
- carry out criminal record checks on all staff before they are appointed [Regulations 4.(2) (a-d), 4A.(3)(a)and(b),4A(7), 4B(2)(a), 4B(3)];
  - keep a correct centralised register of staff appointments[Regulations 4C.(2)(b-d), 4C.(3),(5) under the Standard for the suitability of staff and proprietors and, for the same reason, Regulation 3.(2)(b)];
  - ensure that provision of space for the two year olds is as a minimum 2.5 square metres per child;
  - put in place effective systems to ensure that practitioners and other people aged 16 and over likely to have regular contact with children are suitable to do so, in order to comply with the welfare requirements of the EYFS.
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had followed appropriate procedures and all recruitment checks had been entered correctly on the centralised register.
- 2.6 Since the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is inspected under a different system of regulation, within a two-day limit, the report cannot mention any regulatory deficiencies which are remedied by the end of the STANDARD inspection.

### (ii) Recommended action

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. consider the incorporation of drama as a discrete subject across the school within the teaching curriculum;
  2. extend the role of heads of department to include monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that existing good practice is shared;
  3. complete the introduction of regular staff appraisal to all staff;
  4. extend the new reporting system to include Years 1 and 2;
  5. develop a more united approach to EYFS across the two sections of the setting, by ensuring representation of both sections in planning meetings;
  6. develop the use of the outside areas throughout the EYFS to incorporate a wider range of more frequently available activities;
  7. develop an assessment system that is consistent across the full EYFS age range and ensure that more use is made of outside sources of expertise to raise the profile of moderation and observe best practice.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 From the EYFS onwards, pupils attain high academic standards when compared with the national average for all maintained schools. They make good progress over time in relation to their ability profile which is above the national average, reflecting the aims of the school. Over the past five years, almost all pupils have been successful in achieving places to their first choice of senior, selective school.
- 3.2 In Years 4, 5 and 6, the differing capabilities of pupils are well-recognised by banding and streaming for ability in English and mathematics. Across the school pupils are articulate and confident speakers. Literacy standards are very well developed and pupils receive constructive advice as to how to improve. They write in a range of genres and are given opportunities to work imaginatively. Pupils' mathematical and numerical skills are strong and are used effectively in mathematics and elsewhere when required. Pupils show high levels of creative and critical thinking, which are developed and applied as a result of well-planned lessons and high quality teaching. Their creativity is evident in music, drama, design and technology (DT), art projects, clubs and activities. A high proportion of children learn to play an instrument and take part in the school choir and a large number performed to a high standard in assembly. Independent working, investigations and problem solving are well established across all ages and abilities and offer pupils the opportunity to take control of their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) have individual education plans (IEPs) and receive individual help in class that enables them to progress well.
- 3.3 Considerable development of the use of ICT since the last inspection has enabled pupils to acquire a broad range of ICT skills, including well-presented written work and illustrations, skilfully produced sound recordings and computerised presentations and animations. Pupils' talents are encouraged and nurtured outside lessons and through individual and group activities in all the creative arts, sport and academic pursuits and achieve high levels of success locally and nationally.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages settle quickly in lessons, work purposefully and persevere well, being able to concentrate for long periods of time. They take pride in the presentation of their work and demonstrate a good capacity to study and organise their work independently. Throughout the school, pupils co-operate exceedingly well. Most show a real appetite for acquiring knowledge and their enjoyment of their lessons is palpable.

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

- 3.5 In accordance with its aim to educate pupils for excellence in academic, sporting, cultural, social and personal growth, the school has a balanced, structured and stimulating curriculum that is accessible and suited to all pupils. High academic standards are set and pupils are offered wide opportunities to discover and develop individual talents and interest. Imbalances in religious education (RE) noted in the previous inspection report have been acted upon. The preparation of pupils for the next stage of their education is excellent and is built on the foundations laid by the daily realisation of the school's aims.

- 3.6 Curriculum planning throughout the school is thorough and ensures continuity of education and progress across the years. Schemes of work are comprehensive and take account of assessment data which is collected and used at regular intervals during the pupils' time at the school. Based on the National Curriculum, and also including personal, social and health education (PSHE), RE and French, the curriculum is suitable for the aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Many excellent opportunities encourage pupils to think critically and work independently. Skills associated with speaking and listening are well developed in English and RE where pupils are encouraged to think, discuss, make judgements, and draw conclusions on topical issues; drama activities develop confidence in personal communication skills; and the physical education and games curriculum enables pupils to participate in, and enjoy, a range of physical activities whether participating as individuals, in groups or in teams. The needs of those pupils requiring learning support are well met and their progress is carefully monitored. Close liaison between learning support staff and classroom teachers ensures that this is effective. Gifted and talented pupils are suitably challenged through excellent opportunities for investigative work in many subjects.
- 3.7 The extensive programme of activities offers opportunities for developing creative, sporting and academic interest. Pupils are encouraged to suggest new activities for inclusion in the programme, attend well and speak enthusiastically about their experiences. Notable successes have been achieved, for example in music, speech and drama and chess. A wide range of opportunities are offered for pupils of all ages to visit local places of interest including museums and theatre visits. Year 6 pupils are able to join residential trips where they undertake a number of challenging outdoor activities, as part of developing their social skills and confidence. A range of visitors to the school share a variety of occupations with the pupils.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.8 Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is excellent and enables pupils to learn and understand effectively. Improvements since the last inspection now ensure a greater consistency of experience for all pupils. Teachers know their pupils well; are committed to them; and provide high quality support and guidance which is in keeping with the school's aim to encourage pupils to make the most of their intellectual potential.
- 3.9 The teaching meets the needs of pupils of all abilities, including those requiring support with their learning and those for whom English is an additional language, and enables them to acquire new knowledge, make progress, increase their understanding and develop their skills. The teaching encourages pupils to strive to the best of their abilities. It enables them to work well independently, reflect thoughtfully and contribute openly, and confidently, when developing and exchanging ideas. Since the last inspection opportunities for independent learning have been extended to all pupils and are now of high quality.
- 3.10 At all stages, teaching demonstrates considerable subject expertise, knowledge and understanding that promotes effective progress and encourages good learning. In the most successful lessons, careful attention is given to ensuring that effective teaching strategies are used to support pupils' learning. Lessons stimulate and encourage many aspects of pupils' intellectual, physical and creative development, and with good use of time, they have good opportunities to engage in scientific inquiry and discovery. Classroom behaviour is exemplary, with pupils always willing to add to class learning in a most constructive manner when invited to discuss or to

offer their own views and ideas. Resources are well used and interactive white boards, provided in every classroom, enhance both teaching and learning.

- 3.11 The improved assessment and record-keeping procedures, introduced since the previous inspection, have made a positive contribution to effective teaching and the ability to track pupils' progress through the school accurately. Teachers use assessment data in their planning. Marking is regular and thorough. The meaningful comment written by some teachers as a dialogue between teacher and pupil, which may be continued orally in class, offers additional help and encouragement. A system of half-termly grading of effort and achievement, as well as regular reports, help to keep parents well informed of their children's progress.

## **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 pupils at the school is excellent. The school's aims to value each child and adult and to promote the ideals of community, good citizenship and equal opportunity are fully achieved. This builds further on the good practice in place at the last inspection. The ethos of the school and its Christian values are held in high regard by pupils and staff.
- 4.2 Pupils of all ages including pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are confident and articulate and have a tremendous sense of pride in their own achievement and that of others. Acknowledgement and celebration of success, and praise for something well done, are all part of the school's life, through which the pupils develop self-confidence and self-belief. They learn to value and respect themselves and others.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of pupils is nurtured most successfully in the creative arts, assemblies and religious studies, where they work on themes from many different faiths. Regular assemblies, where the orchestra occasionally plays or the choir sings, provide the opportunity for pupils and staff to come together and make time for celebration of school and individual success, collective worship and space for reflection. Art work around the school highlights pupils' fascination with the process of creating an original piece of art and their obvious pride and enjoyment in the result.
- 4.4 The provision for moral development is outstanding; pupils have a strong moral code, which is upheld by the staff and permeates the daily life at school. Pupils were eager to speak of opportunities to develop their independent thinking and consider world issues, along with an understanding of the needs of people in other countries. Charity events that include supporting a local hospice for children and a cancer support charity, and raising money for the Haiti disaster, continue throughout the year and closely involve pupils, parents and staff. They have a good understanding of the benefit of charitable giving.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent social awareness and feel that they are a valued part of a caring school. Older pupils show consideration for those younger than themselves and the house system, which includes all members of staff, enables a great team spirit to develop. Pupils and staff take the responsibility for their school, which begins with the 'merit charter' which all pupils understand, and which forms the basis of an established reward system. Behaviour within and outside the classroom is of a consistently high standard. Through the PSHE and citizenship course, the personal development of pupils is enhanced as they learn about public institutions, social services, the wider community and how they should respond in difficult situations including bullying. They know who they can turn to for help and advice, if they have a problem, and have a tremendous sense of what is right and wrong. A relaxed yet respectful relationship between pupils and staff allows them to share the common goals of a joy of learning and looking to do their best, whatever the task. Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic about taking on responsibility within their monitor teams and are dedicated to help improve their school. Year 5 pupils have the opportunity to manage and teach a lesson with Year 2 children through a science club project, and this helps to develop a strong link between upper school and the pre-prep.

4.6 Pupils' cultural development is most successful; they display a strong interest in and respect for their own and other cultures and faiths. They are tolerant, open-minded and keen to engage with and understand cultural differences. The level of understanding, tolerance and harmony throughout the school is excellent. The Christian ethos is evident in the school's aims alongside studies of other world religions.

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

4.7 The quality of the pastoral care and the attention given to the welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent throughout the school; this is an improvement from the time of the last inspection. The caring and friendly environment is a major strength of the whole school, and one in which the pupils feel valued and independence is fostered.

4.8 Pupils' welfare is paramount in the aims and ethos of the school, and the measures and procedures to safeguard and promote the health and safety and welfare of the pupils are comprehensive and most successful; they are kept constantly under review. Staff are supported in the day-to-day pastoral care of their pupils by a very well-planned structure. Parents are extremely happy with the care, help and guidance given to their children.

4.9 Co-operation and courtesy are evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils' response to others is exemplary, and they are eager to offer support to one another as well as to visitors to the school. They are willing to express their own views and respect the views of others. Excellent examples of the sensitive and thoughtful evaluation of each others' work were heard during lessons by pupils across the age range. Pupils recognise and understand that they are accountable for their own actions; they work successfully together. Tutors are at the heart of the pastoral system. Regular staff meetings include discussion on pupils' welfare, and information about pupils is shared in order to help or support individual pupils if necessary. The medical care available to pupils who are unwell or injured is excellent. Accident records are kept correctly and the number of first-aiders is ample. The school nurse is continuously available during school hours. Teaching and non-teaching staff are polite to pupils, and pupils respond courteously.

4.10 The school has effective measures in place to promote good discipline and behaviour which are understood by all pupils. Pupils of all ages move around the school purposefully and happily, and settle quickly into lessons. The anti-bullying procedures are highly effective and include the development of awareness of Cyber-bullying through PSHE and ICT lessons.

4.11 A caring atmosphere pervades all areas of school life. All staff take opportunities to promote pupils' welfare through praise and encouragement. Because of the excellent arrangements the school has put in place, pupils are confident that they can ask an adult for support if they have a problem. Strong relationships exist between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves. Members of staff know the pupils well. Through the school curriculum, and with the support of the school nurse, pupils are taught the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise. The school provides a choice of balanced and nutritious dishes at lunch. Younger pupils spoke about the measures the school takes to keep them safe on school visits.

- 4.12 The safeguarding of pupils is good; all staff are trained. Measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards; regular fire drills are held and staff receive fire training. Health and safety procedures are effective, with risk assessments covering all aspects of school life. Electrical testing is appropriately carried out and health and safety documentation is thorough. Risk assessments are undertaken in all areas of the school and those for the health and safety of pupils on school trips are comprehensive and detailed. An accessibility plan is in place, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of Governance is good. The structure of the board serves the school well. Under a new chairman, governors offer a wide range of experience and expertise. Such high-quality governance has been maintained and built upon since the last inspection. Governors take a full part in the overall strategic planning, educational development and management of the school, thus preserving the autonomy of the headmaster and providing critical support for him as necessary. A number of the governors have a personal connection with the school. They work actively with the headmaster to ensure that a high quality of education is provided and that the aims and values of the school are upheld. The work of the main board is supported by appropriate sub committees. Much time has been given recently to formulating a business and development plan. The governing body has been less rigorous, however, in ensuring that recruiting procedures have been correctly followed but now appreciates the need to take responsibility for overseeing day-to-day issues, such as procedures for dealing with child protection and safer recruitment.
- 5.2 The board of governors meets regularly. Properly recorded meetings ensure that governors are well informed and are best equipped to oversee the work of the school. They are determined, through prudent financial planning, to ensure that the school's accommodation and human and material resources are of the highest quality in order to meet pupils' educational needs.
- 5.3 Improved systems of communication enable governors to keep in touch with the ongoing progress of the school. The chairman meets regularly with the headmaster. Governors frequently visit the school, attend SMT meetings and meet with staff. Policies on Health and Safety and child protection are reviewed annually.
- 5.4 The governors are very proud of the school, in particular the friendly community spirit and the well rounded, articulate young people it develops. They are happy to support the many school events as far as is practicable. The headmaster is well supported by the governing body.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.5 The quality of overall leadership and management of the school is good. Structures and routines are clear, comprehensive and well communicated. Leadership and management are strong and effective across the whole range of school activity, exercised always in a considerate and sensitive manner. Leadership and management of the Early Years setting are satisfactory.
- 5.6 Through the headmaster and SMT, the school is led with vision and a commitment to achieving the best possible standards in academic pursuits, pastoral care and personal development of pupils. A clearer vision and educational direction for the school is emerging which has inspired a growing fulfilment and confidence amongst the staff and now allows significant delegation to take place. Recent initiatives and policy reviews already indicate that there is greater clarity in expectations and standards for staff and pupils alike. Parents now have appropriate information in line with regulatory requirements. Heads of departments have become clearer about their responsibility for monitoring and improving standards in the quality of teaching

and learning, and senior managers work well together. The school's development plan is comprehensive; it is based on a thorough evaluation of current provision and is the result of extensive consultation.

- 5.7 The senior management team meets regularly each week to discuss matters of current importance in routine management and to plan pro-actively for future developments in the school. Minutes are kept; decisions are made and are effectively implemented across the school. Recently appointed senior staff, with established senior managers, work closely combining their expertise to set high standards and expectations for themselves and for others for whom they are responsible. They are successful in securing, supporting and motivating staff. All staff feel involved in the school and part of its growth.
- 5.8 Recruitment procedures are efficient and safe, and all checks on staff, regular assistants and visitors are now applied fully and correctly. Non-teaching staff including administrative, secretarial, support, housekeeping, catering, maintenance and grounds staff, all display the commitment, dedication and loyalty to the school evident in the teaching staff. Arrangements for induction for staff new to the school are excellent. This includes support before joining to ensure a smooth start to their career in the school. The school pays careful attention to the development of its staff. All teachers are now part of a recently introduced, regular appraisal system.

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

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The majority of parents are extremely satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. The school's aim to foster close and supportive home/school relationships is well met. The high standards in place at the time of the last inspection have been built on to include improved opportunities for pupils requiring help with their learning.
- 5.10 Parents feel welcome in the school and are frequently involved in supporting a variety of activities including sporting fixtures, concerts and drama productions as well as sharing daily in the work and progress of their children. Staff are readily accessible to parents and good examples of this were seen during the period of inspection.
- 5.11 The Parents' Association is instrumental in encouraging parents into the school, for example, by organising activities that include the Christmas Fayre, staff/parents quiz, beetle drives and charity events.
- 5.12 Parents feel they are well informed about their children's progress. Helpful, well-considered and personal reports, issued twice each year, detail each pupil's academic achievement and personal development. Additionally parents receive half termly report grade sheets detailing both effort and achievement. Parents' consultation evenings and informal discussion with the staff provide additional sources of information. Regular meetings for parents familiarise them with the curriculum as their children move through the school. Parents are able to speak directly to teachers or to communicate through pupils' homework diaries, telephone or email. The procedures for the transfer of year 6 pupils to their future schools are well thought out, comprehensive and thorough.
- 5.13 Concerns or complaints are resolved sensitively and professionally within a set framework. One formal complaint was received during the past academic year.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 Hallfield's EYFS is satisfactory overall. Provision is good, meeting children's individual needs, and meeting the setting's aims. It is based on effective teaching that helps develop children's lively independent minds, personal confidence and concern for others. As a result, children make good progress in their learning and in their personal development. Children's welfare is important to staff, but at the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were not complete. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. Links with other partners are satisfactory but moderation of assessments is not given enough importance and outside expertise is not used fully, limiting the capacity for continuous improvement. Satisfactory progress has been made overall on the recommendations of previous inspections.

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

6.2 Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory. Clear direction is given but the two separate sections are not fully integrated. With the exception of safeguarding, policies and procedures underpin learning, inclusion and welfare effectively. An appropriate number of staff hold relevant qualifications. They are suitably deployed. The good indoor and outdoor resources are kept clean and risk assessments are detailed and reviewed regularly. Links with parents are strong. In the parental questionnaire parents expressed strong support for the setting. A small number felt that their children do not have enough access to the outside environment at school; inspection findings were concurrent with this view. A few felt that their children were encouraged to be independent too early but inspectors found no evidence to substantiate this view.

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

6.3 Provision is good overall. Strengths in teaching enable children to achieve well, through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. There is suitable balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities in most classes, giving children the opportunity to develop their confidence and independence. Planning is detailed across all areas of learning. Thorough initial and ongoing observational assessment identifies what children can do, and the next steps they need to make progress. Assessment processes are good overall but inconsistent between the two sections. The outside areas are currently underused for learning although excellent equipment is available. The inside space for the two year olds is not sufficient for all those who attend. Key people guide and support children well and provide safe and clear routines for them. Before-school and after-school care is well run and provides a continuing supportive environment for children who attend.

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

- 6.4 Children achieve well. They develop good personal skills, absorbing the school's culture of respect and cooperation. Children develop the ability to converse confidently, enjoy books and ask and answer questions using well-constructed sentences. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is developed through first hand experiences. Nursery children use the interactive whiteboard without adult help, for instance to identify cubes and cones. Some Reception children are already able to write and punctuate simple sentences. As they explore, investigate and respond to challenges, they concentrate with increasing perseverance. Children develop a good awareness of personal safety and display well developed self-help skills, for example knowing they must wash their hands before eating and dressing suitably for outdoor play. In all they do, they show great enjoyment and this assists them to make their good progress.

**Complaints since the last inspection**

- 6.5 Since the last inspection, one complaint was made to Ofsted in relation to the EYFS welfare requirements. The complaint was investigated by Ofsted, and the provider was not required to take any action to meet national requirements.

**What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## 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 chair of governors and a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Frank Skipwith	Reporting inspector
Mr Martin Watson	Head, HMC school
Mrs Judith Skillington	Former deputy head, IAPS school
Mr Paul Oldham	Deputy head, IAPS school
Mrs Ruth McFarlane	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Ros Ford	Director of studies, IAPS school