

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

ST.AUBYN'S SCHOOL

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

St. Aubyn's School

| | |
|---|---|
| Full Name of the School | St. Aubyn's School |
| DCSF Number | 317/6002 |
| Early Years Number | EY240661 |
| Registered Charity Number | 270143 |
| Address | Bunces Lane, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 9DU |
| Telephone Number | 0208 508 2053 |
| Fax Number | 0208 508 2053 |
| Email Address | school@staubyns.com |
| Head | Mr Gordon James |
| Chairman of Governors | Mr Dilip Shah |
| Age Range (of the whole school) | 3 - 13 |
| Gender | Mixed |
| Inspection Dates | 9th to 12th February 2009 |
| Head of Early Years Setting | Mrs M Bland |
| Early Years Age Range | 3 - 5 |
| Early Years Gender | Mixed |
| Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates | 9th and 10th February 2009 |

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 for all children from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday in England. The inspection was carried out by the ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework published by DCSF. It follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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.

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|----------|
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2 THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION | |
| The Educational Experience Provided | |
| Pupils' Learning and Achievements | |
| Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils | |
| The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment) | |
| 3 THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS | |
| The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils | |
| The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community | |
| The Quality of Boarding Education | |
| 4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT | |
| The Quality of Governance | |
| The Quality of Leadership and Management | |
| 5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS | |
| Overall Conclusions | |
| Next Steps | |
| 6 INSPECTION EVIDENCE | |
| 7 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) | |

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 St Aubyn's School was founded as a boys' school in 1884 and has been in its present situation since 1919. It became co-educational in 1995. The present head has been in the post since 1993. Since the last inspection in 2003 there have been changes in the management structure with the establishment of the post of Director of Studies. New buildings such as the information technology centre and a whole-school library are in use.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide an environment in which each child can learn and grow within a traditional and structured framework, but with a wide and forward looking curriculum. The acquisition of fundamental skills has high importance, together with personal development, self respect and respect for others. In addition its aim is to produce children who are self confident and enquiring learners and who are sociable, responsible and tolerant. The original school motto is '*Fortiter, fideliter, feliciter*' – bravely, faithfully, happily. This is still used and reflects the approach to learning and teaching today.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 503 pupils in the school of whom two-thirds are boys. Of these 106 were in the Nursery and Reception years of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 120 in Years 1 and 2, (the pre-prep department) 180 in Years 3 to 5 (the middle school department) and 97 in Years 6 to 8 (the senior school department) The school has a three form entry after nursery. Pupils generally live within a 15 mile radius of the school.
- 1.4 Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the percentage of ethnic minority children from a third to 55%.just over a half. Pupils are mainly from business and professional families. The ability profile of the school shows a wide range but is above the average for all maintained primary schools. Some children speak a language other than English at home, but very few children are not fluent in English and the school only provides support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) if it is thought necessary. The school has identified 44 pupils as having some form of mild learning difficulty or disability (LDD).
- 1.5 Some children leave at the age of eleven to enter other independent schools or maintained grammar schools. Those who leave at thirteen normally move to independent senior schools. A small number leave at seven. The main points of entry are into the EYFS, into Year 3 and into Year 7.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.
- 1.7 See Section 7 for the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 St Aubyn's school provides a wide-ranging and successful educational experience for its pupils. The visitor is struck by the happy family atmosphere and this is borne out by parental comments. The aim of the school to provide a traditional framework but within a forward looking curriculum is achieved. The school succeeds in helping children to become self confident and enquiring learners.
- 2.2 Since the last inspection French has been introduced to children in Reception and all children in Years 1 and 2 receive group lessons in violin and cello. Information and communication technology (ICT) has been extended by the introduction of interactive whiteboards in each room and the new ICT suite. More specialist physical education and art teaching now takes place. Teaching assistants are deployed throughout the school and there is increased focus on provision for the more able.
- 2.3 The school's success in meeting its aims is demonstrated by the good academic standards achieved, the wide range of opportunities, and the progress made by all pupils regardless of ability. The curriculum is well planned and includes French, Latin from Year 6, dance and drama. The curriculum is based on the national curriculum with extension to allow for 11+ and Common Entrance examinations.
- 2.4 The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children an extremely good start in the acquisition of early skills. Literacy, numeracy, creative and scientific skills are secure throughout the school. Year 6 showed exceptional mental ability in a Countdown game and pupils in the pre-prep showed excellent number skills. Competent and interesting creative writing was seen in all areas of the school particularly in Year 2's writing on the Great Fire. Year 8 wrote exciting suspense stories which left the reader wanting to know the outcome. Projects give opportunities for extended writing and cross-curricular skills and Years 3 to 5 spend one term doing their own researched project. A recent pupil started a history of the school as his project, and it has since been finished and is about to be published. Speaking and listening skills are high. Year 7 intelligently discussed the merits of voluntary euthanasia, as well as their ideas on the credit crunch and recession. In interviews pupils were articulate and keen to discuss their educational experience. ICT skills are extremely competent and are well used in many areas of the curriculum and attractive displays were seen throughout the school. Older pupils find that Latin increases their English vocabulary and pupils have a good knowledge of French culture and language.
- 2.5 Artistic and creative provision is strong with the school having gained the Silver Artsmark for its work. Music is of a high standard and the orchestra has been boosted by pupils who started their instrumental tuition in Years 1 and 2. A concert during the inspection included tuneful singing, soloists and instrumental groups such as African drums. The school's own music award scheme helps foster interest and encourages pupils. Art and design and technology (DT) is well displayed throughout the school and pupils have won awards in competitions. Drama is strong, and pupils joined with those of other schools to produce a cross- curricular production based on T S Eliot's 'Practical Cats'
- 2.6 A wide variety of sports is played and pupils benefit from the physical activity and the opportunities for competitive sport. All pupils from Years 4 to 8 are able to play in a school team at sometime during the year. Cricket is strong and girls have their own successful football team. Cross country, athletics and swimming enhance sports provision as well as the

indoor rowing league in which older pupils participate. Very popular playtime catching clubs and the Mile a Time competition also extend pupils' opportunities for physical activity.

- 2.7 Personal development is boosted by residential trips for Years 5 and 7 and the teambuilding exercise at the beginning of Year 8. These help encourage personal responsibility and introduce the demands of life away from home. Together with the personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum (PSHCE) these provide valuable preparation for adult life. For younger years, PSHCE, which includes Circle Time, helps them make decisions about living healthy and happy lives as well as discussing ways to resolve personal and group problems.
- 2.8 A wide range of extra-curricular activities which include Russian, chess, handbell ringing, newspaper editing and sports, is offered throughout the school, reflecting the school's aim to provide opportunities in which every child can achieve. Tutors and form teachers record activities taken up by individual children to ensure that all take part. Efforts have been made to ensure that male members of staff take some activities for younger pupils. Pupils feel that these extra opportunities contribute to their personal development, and widen their horizons. Frequent subject based outings to places such as the Greenwich Planetarium and Reception children's visit from the Pearly Queen, give focus to historical, geographical and scientific studies
- 2.9 All pupils achieve entrance to a school of their choice with good number gaining awards, as a result of being well prepared for entrance examinations and being able to show evidence of a wide range of interests. Pupils are ready for the next stage in their education, whether to their next school at eleven or thirteen, or the move from Early Years to pre-prep or Year 2 to Year 3. The move upwards in the school, is seen as going to a new experience but one which is familiar. Increasing responsibility is given to pupils as they get older and are expected to organise themselves and their learning. A feature of the school is a School Council for each department which pupils in Reception take as seriously as those in Year 8
- 2.10 The curriculum is well balanced. Lessons are an hour long, and some subjects are taught for one or two terms a year. However, the length of lessons provides an adequate balance. Pupils benefit from workshops, drama activities and visits from speakers such as the local services, authors and dramatists. The curriculum is extremely well planned and shows much improved continuity and clear progression throughout the school, and supports pupils' learning. Short-term planning indicates how differing needs are to be met.
- 2.11 Provision for learning support is good. Lesson plans take different needs into account and all teachers share responsibility for meeting those needs in a variety of ways including booster sessions which can be for those with LDD or the more able. However, some parents were concerned about late diagnosis of their children's needs and their feeling that no one person had overall responsibility. They felt that when a diagnosis had been made, good support was received. Inspectors agreed that the present system restricts clear lines of communication relating to the specific needs of particular pupils. Provision for the more able is much improved since the last inspection with better planning for more extension activities. Few children need learning support for EAL - many speak another language at home but also speak English fluently.
- 2.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.13 High aspirations and clear expectations of its pupils have resulted in the school successfully achieving its aims especially to enable pupils to become self confident enquiring learners.

Children in the EYFS make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Learning and achievement is good overall and some aspects are outstanding. Whether pupils leave the school at eleven or thirteen, they are well educated for their age, having studied a wide range of subjects and have a secure grounding in the skills needed to achieve both academically and socially. The Years 6, 7 and 8 review scheme is particularly successful enabling pupils to build up a folder of revision notes and the opportunity to ask for clarification if they have not understood part of a lesson. Inspection evidence found that although the system in place for learning support enables pupils to make good progress, centralising and simplifying its organisation would make it more effective.

- 2.14 Pupils concentrate well and are willing to think through a problem and pose their own questions for discussion such as Year 5 deciding on the implications of building a bypass. Year 7 made their own notes on ways to solve common multiples and factors. Presentation of work is often outstanding and generally good across the school. ICT skills are good and were seen in English, history and religious studies and in science when Year 8 pupils gave interesting presentations on lung disease. Plans are in place to incorporate more ICT into lesson planning. Personal and class projects encourage research skills. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards and the new ICT centre and library.
- 2.15 In national tests taken at the ages of seven and eleven, results over the last three years have been above average for all maintained primary schools in English, mathematics and science. Although the ability range is wide, at the age of seven writing and reading have been far above the national average. Eleven year old test results show mathematics being far above, English well above and science above the national average showing that pupils make strong progress.
- 2.16 Achievement in creative, aesthetic and physical activity is good and often outstanding especially in music. The Silver Artsmark award and the school's own music award scheme from Early Years upwards, are evidence of the standards reached. In sport there have been successes in local and county tournaments including the girls' football team being the local borough champions. Some pupils represent the county in football, cricket and athletics. Boys are included in good ballet and drama exam results and some pupils are appearing in a current West End musical. Six gold awards were won in the Primary Maths Challenge. Achievements are widely celebrated in school assemblies and in the systems and displays of achievement awards which help to foster self esteem and self confidence. A variety of work is displayed around the school. The school has also been awarded an Eco-school award for its work in helping to preserve the environment.
- 2.17 In their questionnaire pupils showed a positive outlook towards their work and this is reinforced by the school's emphasis on providing a happy learning environment. The older pupils are well organised and are encouraged to keep notes and folders in good order. They work independently or co-operatively in lessons as shown by a Year 4 mathematics lesson when different ability groups were working quietly, and willingly helping each other.
- 2.18 Pupils happily talk about their work, are articulate and able to argue to prove their point. The pre-prep school councillors sensibly discussed their ideas for sharing new playground equipment. The new all-age library had only been available for a very short time before the inspection but already it was being well used. Behaviour in and around the school is very good helped by the friendly but respectful relationships with teachers. Pupils are extremely quick to settle to work, and feel they are encouraged to achieve high standards. They show enthusiasm and clearly enjoy the wide range of learning opportunities offered by the school.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.19 The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding throughout the school including the EYFS. Pupils' lives are enriched spiritually by the great emphasis placed upon the recognition and celebration of pupils' achievements throughout the school, as seen in the middle school achievement board, celebration assemblies and the thorough recording of pupils' achievements. Teachers are constantly encouraging and praising pupils. A varied and impressive approach to assemblies creates an awareness of different faiths. Christianity is emphasised but all faiths are mentioned. In a poignant assembly on Remembrance, the names of St Aubyn's pupils who died in the Great War were read out and Hindu pupils were wished a happy Divali. A well developed PSHCE programme encourages pupils to talk about their faiths in the classroom. A Year 1 lesson focused on the five pillars of Islam and a teacher showed a copy of the Koran and helped by pupils, demonstrated how to pray. In lessons pupils are encouraged to discuss the meaning of their faiths. Excellent displays in classrooms and corridors give meaning to the different religions of the world and the multi-cultural nature of the school.
- 2.20 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Polite, respectful behaviour is always encouraged and staff are good role models. Pupils demonstrate a sense of fairness and mutual respect towards others. In discussion pupils were keen to show that they know the difference between right and wrong. Great emphasis is placed upon the Golden Rules which are prominently displayed across the school and commented upon in the lessons. Year 2 literacy work on 'Advertising St Aubyn's' intimated that the school system helps them make the right choices. Responsibility for one's own actions is encouraged throughout the school.
- 2.21 Pupils develop very well socially. Responsibilities are carried out efficiently and seriously by members of the three School Councils which are an effective voice for the pupils. The senior Council discussed the anti-bullying policy and amended it. Pupils in the pre-prep Council discussed the merits of a buddy system. Successful fund raising, often organised by pupils, has nine charities at present adopted as beneficiaries. Representatives from the whole school serve on the Eco-Committee which has taken very serious decisions on recycling and fruit composting.
- 2.22 Senior pupils can be chosen as Praepostors (prefects) and House Captains. The position of Praepostor is viewed as an inspiration to many. One Year 7 pupil saw it as that of a role model. He would like to aspire to that position and therefore 'he always thought twice before doing anything'. The Young Manager's scheme encourages pupils to take on responsibility. They apply for positions at the start of Year 8 and are interviewed for posts such as librarian or sound technician. Year 7 pupils appreciate the opportunity to act as Nursery assistants. They volunteer to use their lunch time to assist Nursery pupils with reading and play. Pupils also gain in social awareness by playing in concerts and assemblies and learning to accept applause gracefully.
- 2.23 Culturally, pupils are extremely well developed. They respect their own and other cultures not only through the many high standard multi-cultural displays, but also by playing and being taught together and respecting each other's wishes and values. Year 2 displayed their Passports to the World with pupils making their own passports and contributing written work from all over the world. Teachers' planning incorporates different cultures and beliefs into schemes of work particularly in religious studies, history, geography, English, music, art and PSHCE. Amongst other activities, Year 7 enjoyed African drumming workshops.
- 2.24 The Comenius project enriches the life experience of all by introducing the St Aubyn's community to other cultures across Europe. Strong links have been developed with schools in

Turkey, the Czech Republic, Sicily and Poland. Czech visitors played cricket and joined in sports day and a cultural day was held for staff from Comenius schools and their children. Teachers from St Aubyn's have visited schools in the other countries. The school has gained International School status and holds international dance and food days. In the parental questionnaire several parents commented that St Aubyn's is a truly multi-cultural school and this is supported by inspection evidence. A pupil described St Aubyn's as 'like living in a village where everyone knows you'. The school successfully fulfils its aims to produce pupils who are sociable, responsible and tolerant.

- 2.25 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.26 The quality of teaching overall is good, and some is outstanding. Teaching is effective in enabling pupils of all abilities to make good progress, and meets the school's aim to produce pupils who are able to work independently. Planning and assessment have much improved since the last inspection.
- 2.27 Teaching is effective in enabling pupils to acquire new knowledge. Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils and independent learning is encouraged, as in Year 2 where pupils designed a new school prospectus. The teaching of those with LDD and the more able pupils is generally good, and in some areas it is excellent. Independent learning and discussion, is being well developed as in a Year 5 PSHCE. lesson, which provoked detailed discussion on the topic of conflict resolution. Year 6 were challenged and extended with open-ended questions. A Year 2 French lesson, delivered entirely in the target language, captured pupils' imagination through the effective use of glove puppets, and some pupils took the opportunity to follow up this work in the lunchtime club. A wide range of teaching strategies in a Year 8 French lesson enabled all pupils to learn at their own level.
- 2.28 Teaching continually emphasises the merits of responsible behaviour and in most lessons a sense of calm and maturity is conveyed through effective teaching which refers not only to academic work but also to social skills. Pupils generally behave well and develop good attitudes and skills.
- 2.29 Long term planning is comprehensively developed across all age groups, and since the last inspection is better monitored by subject heads. Additionally, subject coordinators in the middle school and pre-prep, lead middle and short term planning, and some peer monitoring is taking place. Clear learning objectives are made explicit, planning sheets are well annotated and pre and post topic reviews all inform planning. Very well planned pre-prep literacy and numeracy take account of the wide range of abilities and progress is ensured by the use of learning support teachers and the teaching assistants.
- 2.30 The best planning and teaching identifies appropriate objectives for the varied abilities and contains a variety of activities. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with well used resources, and end with an effective plenary session. Year 3 and Year 4 literacy lessons showed deductive and evaluative work for five different ability levels enabling good progress for all. In less successful lessons, teaching strategies are less varied with a more restrictive range of activities and learning styles. These lessons lack dynamism, sometimes run out of time and pupils find it more difficult to concentrate. One-hour lessons can sometimes be too long for younger pupils, when there is not substantial variation in activities, tasks, and

resources. In some lessons teaching assistants are well involved in planning, but are not always most usefully deployed.

- 2.31 Teachers are well aware of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of their pupils. They know their pupils well, aided by the wide variety of assessment information available. The atmosphere in lessons is supportive and even the youngest pupils are confident in expressing opinions, and carefully consider the views of others. The effective review system recently introduced for older pupils enables them to gain extra assistance as appropriate, and is valued by the pupils. Teachers' own knowledge of their subjects is good, and specialists are well used for older pupils and in teaching younger pupils French, music, ICT and physical education.
- 2.32 The performing arts centre, the new computer suites, and interactive whiteboards, ensure that teachers have access to a wide range of good quality resources, which are well used to support teaching and learning. The new library has already had positive impact upon teaching and learning and is already in use for independent research by pupils across the school.
- 2.33 Pupils' work is marked regularly, and marking is often outstanding. Some less satisfactory marking did not include targets, and comments were sometimes unencouraging. Assessment worksheets are well used, with both pupil and teacher comments on the work completed. The school uses a wide variety of tests to evaluate the performance of pupils. Thorough and regular subject reviews ensure progress is measured and well tracked. Records are accurately kept and information properly shared between staff. All pupil records will soon be electronically stored allowing easy access and even more effective tracking. Assessment is now outstanding and is used extremely well to inform planning.
- 2.34 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 Pastoral care and welfare, health and safety is outstanding throughout the school, including the EYFS. Inspection evidence showed that pupils are well supported and encouraged, as at the last inspection. Pastoral care is shared throughout the school community with its pupils still displaying the essence of the school's original motto of *Fortiter, Fideliter, Feliciter*. The Golden Rules and school mission statement are well displayed and observed by pupils. The needs of individual pupils are supported, for example by the use of left handed notebooks to help those trying to improve their handwriting in Year 3. Tutors and form teachers work together to care for their pupils and encourage pupils to care for each other. They are assisted by the nurse and indeed all school staff whether teaching or non-teaching. Lunchtime supervisors, particularly in the pre-prep, play a large part in the effectiveness of playground care.
- 3.2 Staff know their pupils well and maintain a respectful, but friendly and informal relationship with them. Pupils demonstrate a genuine mutual concern as seen by discussions in the School Councils. The senior School Council reviewed the anti-bullying policy and decided that talking behind another person's back could be construed as bullying. Pupils are generally well behaved throughout the school, greeting each other, teachers and visitors in a genuinely pleasant manner. They behave well in class but are happy to show their natural exuberance in the playground. A pre-prep assembly used one of Aesop's fables to demonstrate that kindness is better than severity or anger. Registration time is well used and included a thoughtful discussion in Year 6 on aspects of recent items in the news, both good and bad.
- 3.3 Effective measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are in place throughout the school with a range of much valued reward systems including postcards to collect, house-points, merit badges and certificates. Any problems are handled quickly and effectively. The anti-bullying policy is understood by pupils who feel they are safe in the school environment. Various reminders can be seen around the school on posters and display work. Significantly, in their questionnaire, parents showed great support for the high standard of pastoral care and no parent commented negatively on bullying.
- 3.4 Pupils' welfare is given high priority. All staff are given appropriate checks. The headmaster is the designated Child Protection Officer and has received the relevant training, as has the Deputy Head. These measures ensure that pupils feel safe, secure, valued, respected and confident, and they know how to approach adults if they are in difficulty. Attendance and admissions registers are correctly and accurately maintained and effective procedures are established to follow up any unexpected absences.
- 3.5 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards, and site safety is well managed. The absence of litter on the site and the amount of recycling demonstrates the work and success of the Eco-committee who take their responsibilities seriously and encourage others to follow their example. All policies for first aid, fire prevention and health and safety are in place, and the health and safety committee meet regularly to discuss any issues. The business manager works with maintenance staff to ensure that minor problems are dealt with quickly. All safety equipment is regularly checked by an outside agency, as are portable electrical appliances. A comprehensive guide for safe internet use for school and home, including the dangers of communicating with strangers, is available on the virtual learning environment, and older pupils and their parents sign a responsible computer use contract and also discuss this in school. The health and safety of pupils on educational visits

is seen as paramount with all trips well planned, together with a comprehensive risk assessment. A qualified nurse is employed who deals effectively with both medical and pastoral issues and uses a well-appointed sick room. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid and the administration of 'epi-pens'.

- 3.6 Healthy eating is encouraged and the school meals provide a choice of healthy options, although meal serving arrangements are somewhat cramped. The requirements of pupils with food allergies are catered for. Breakfast and tea are available for pupils, staff and parents. Pupils in the pre-prep and middle school may only bring in fresh fruit snacks, and the benefits of a healthy diet are emphasised by posters and display work. Pupils have adequate opportunity for exercise both inside and outside although playground and dry sports space for older pupils is limited when the fields are wet.
- 3.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.8 The quality of links with parents and the community is outstanding. Parents value the education and pastoral support provided for their children. They have many opportunities to be involved in activities in the school and in the work and progress of their children. Parents are welcome to attend a wide range of school events such as regular parent evenings to discuss their children's progress, music concerts, camp night and drama productions. The opportunity for parents to start the day sharing breakfast with their children is evidence of the value the school places on family. The after-school club also provides an activity programme for the whole school community. Parents are invited to introduce pupils to the world of work by giving talks about their professions and faiths.
- 3.9 The St Aubyn's School Society (SASS) allows parents to meet socially in well supported events such as a quiz night, Family Day, a Christmas bazaar and an annual summer ball. It encourages parental involvement in the life of the school and raises money to provide the school with extra resources such as class sets of musical instruments, laptops and a school minibus.
- 3.10 An excellent range of information both on the curriculum and general school life, is provided for parents both current and prospective, by email, letters, monthly newsletters from each department, notice boards and the website. The school's open door policy is welcomed and well used by parents. All regularly updated policies are available on the school website. The school magazine is a showcase of school life reflecting pupils' talents and achievements. In the near future, the relatively new virtual learning environment (VLE), introduced to middle and senior school pupils so far, will allow access for all parents who will be able to log on to teaching modules, news and events enhancing home/school communication. As well as homework diaries which are used for communication across the school, frequent reports are thorough and detailed and include recommendations for improvement, with opportunities for parents' and pupils' comments. As well as termly reports, Years 3 to 8 receive half termly grades and comments about progress and learning.
- 3.11 A small minority of parents indicated that concerns were not always dealt with effectively. Evidence shows that appropriate systems are in place and are correctly followed. Staff make every possible effort to resolve concerns and a significant number of other parents indicated that they were very happy with the school's response. Parents are made aware of the procedures to be followed in case of concern.

- 3.12 Links with both the local and the wider community are strong. These include the use of the St Aubyn's Sports Centre for general hire, the St Aubyn's Holiday Club programme, the indoor cricket league, badminton and the very popular sports birthday parties. The school participates in the Local Authority Walk to School initiative, and pupils and staff receive reward badges for helping to reduce car journeys. The Eco-committee works tirelessly to ensure that the school strives to be as eco-friendly as possible and encourages the whole school community to show a concern for their environment and an appreciation and understanding of the world about them. The school has acquired the highly coveted Silver Eco-School Award and in the last two years has successfully completed the Yellow Woods Challenge by recycling directories.
- 3.13 Good use is made of the local natural surroundings for sporting and other activities, such as tree planting in Hainault Forest; good links exist with Redbridge Local Education Authority and the school enters local music festivals. Sporting fixtures take place with both maintained and independent schools and the school choir sings at outside venues and with other local schools. The Army Cadets programme encourages self discipline, goodwill and respect and is an unusual link with the local and wider community.
- 3.14 The school has continued to support and raise funds for Haven House Hospice through concerts and charity afternoons. Other charities supported by the school include Jeans for Genes, the Lauren Page Trust, Crisis and The Retired Greyhound Trust. Charities are chosen by the pupils and events often organised by them. The school believes strongly that such involvement increases pupils' awareness for those less fortunate than themselves.
- 3.15 The school community benefits from the very positive links with Comenius Schools across Europe, and its status as a British Council International school. Its links with the school aims that pupils should be sociable, responsible, tolerant and responsive to each person's talents and needs, and also allows pupils to feel part of the local and wider community.
- 3.16 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The school is very well governed. Governors are appropriately qualified and experienced and many have a link with the school. They accept the commitment involved in their appointment and through the structure of five committees ensure that their expertise is well used and that the aims of the school are met. The committees are Finance, Development, Health and Safety, Fabric and Education and they make an important contribution to the school. Full governor meetings and sub-committees are minuted and well structured and indicate wide ranging discussion of the topics discussed.
- 4.2 Governors carry out their responsibilities particularly with regard to health and safety, child protection and finance and are well informed about the school. They are aware of the next steps for the future of the school and make full contributions to the development plan. Wise financial management has ensured excellent facilities and the recent new build of library and ICT centre has provided the whole school with an outstanding new learning resource. Good staffing levels and generous resources all support the high quality of education which is provided.
- 4.3 Governors have some opportunities to meet staff and there are plans to increase this. They hear from staff about the work of the school and attend school functions. Some governors watch lessons and have been particularly interested in the use of the interactive whiteboards. Staff and leadership feel well supported by governors.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 The school, including the EYFS, is extremely well led and managed. Experienced leadership and management successfully support the school's aims, particularly that of providing a safe and happy learning environment. Management has worked hard to implement recommendations from the last inspection into present plans.
- 4.5 The senior management team (SMT) provides good support to the head and since the last inspection has been strengthened by the appointment of a Director of Studies. Parents acknowledged and appreciated the approachability of the head and leadership team and pupils particularly welcomed the presence of the head in the playground each morning before school. Line management has been strengthened to allow increasing responsibility for heads of subjects and subject managers. One teacher volunteers to join the SMT for a specified period each year to gain experience.
- 4.6 The Director of Studies effectively oversees the curriculum of the whole school and is well assisted by heads of department and subject heads and managers. Regular meetings across the school ensure continuity and monitoring of the curriculum. Heads of core subjects oversee it throughout the school and subject managers of the middle school and pre- prep monitor teaching, learning and the much improved assessment and are effectively leading their departments. Plans are in place for this to be extended to all subjects. Lesson observation takes place as part of staff appraisal and sometimes otherwise, but best practice in teaching is not yet fully shared across all departments. In some areas of the school, teaching assistants contribute to planning and are well deployed enhancing learning support and pupils' learning, but this is not always the case. Staff are dedicated and committed to the academic and pastoral care of the pupils. Parents and pupils alike commented on their caring attitude

and the time they willingly devote to help for individual pupils as well as extra-curricular activities.

- 4.7 The development plan sets out priorities for the next three years and detailed annual reviews by the governors and staff strengthen its effectiveness. Department and subject heads have their own budgets and finances are well managed to provide excellent resources which enhance teaching and learning.
- 4.8 The day-to-day management of the school is efficient and strongly supported by the helpful administrative team. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are enthusiastic and hard working. Teaching and other assistants in the before and after-school clubs, lunchtime supervisors, the school nurse, together with grounds, catering, security and maintenance staff, many of whom have been at the school for a number of years, all take a pride in their work and contribute to the pastoral care of the pupils. This dedication contributes to the strong sense of community at the school.
- 4.9 Well-qualified staff receive appropriate Criminal Records Bureau and other checks. Contracts are suitable and new staff induction is effective. The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and meets its requirements. There are no NQTs teaching in the school at present but the school has been commended for its previous good practice.
- 4.10 Staff professional development is a high priority of the school, and results from the needs of the school improvement plan, together with individual requirements identified through thorough evaluation of staff appraisal. For example, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors have had training in playground games to enhance supervision and pupils' learning experiences. Staff are appropriately trained in regularly updated child protection and first aid.
- 4.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.12 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meet its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 St Aubyn's very successfully achieves its aims to provide a safe learning environment for all its pupils, including the EYFS and enables them to become self confident enquiring learners who are sociable and responsible, as well as being tolerant and responsive to each others talents and needs. Its many outstanding aspects include pupils' personal development particularly their cultural development and the leadership training they receive in Years 7 and 8. Pupils' relationships with their peers and teachers result in happy confident boys and girls throughout the school, who settle to work quickly and generally behave well. Links with parents and the community are outstanding as is the range of extra- curricular activities. Assessment and the provision for different academic needs is also exceptionally effective. These high standards also apply to the pre-prep. They are made possible by the committed and highly experienced leadership of the head and management team and the hard work and dedication of all staff. St Aubyn's is a truly happy multi-cultural community.
- 5.2 The school is aware that it needs to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best, and it agrees that learning support organisation should be centralised. It also plans to provide even more opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. Much progress has been made since the last inspection in 2003, since when management links between senior, middle and the pre-prep departments have been considerably strengthened, and successful assessment and tracking of pupils introduced. The EYFS inspection showed good progress in all aspects.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school has no significant weaknesses. In order to move further forward, it should:
1. share the best practice in teaching by encouraging more peer observation across departments in order to develop more high level teaching and learning skills;
 2. develop the structure for learning support by streamlining its organisation.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 What the setting needs to improve and compliance with the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are detailed in Section 7 of this report.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 9th to 12th February. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 9th and 10th February by one inspector. The inspector observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and governors. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspector examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mrs Margaret Smallwood | Reporting Inspector |
| Mr Martin Bates | Acting Deputy Head ISA school |
| Mrs Linda Dennis | Deputy Head IAPS school |
| Mr Terry Fawell | Former Head ISA school |
| Miss Angela Rawlinson | Head IAPS school |
| Mr Tim Walton | Head of department IAPS school |
| Mrs Sara Wiggins | Early Years Lead Inspector |

7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

- 7.1 The setting aims to ensure that each child becomes a self-confident, independent, inquiring learner by providing a learning environment characterised by high aspirations and clear expectations. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has its own buildings, a dedicated outdoor play area for the Nursery and access to the grounds and facilities shared by the school as a whole. Recent additions to these have included a library and an information and communication technology (ICT) suite. Currently, there are forty-three children in Nursery, attending either full or part-time from the term after their third birthday, and sixty-three children in Reception. Children enter the three Reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday. All children receive government funding until the term of their fifth birthday. No child in the EYFS is identified as having learning difficulties. Two children are classified as having English as an additional language but both communicate well in English. Since the last inspection creative challenges and the staff's knowledge of what the children will learn from these activities have greatly improved.
- 7.2 The EYFS provision at St Aubyn's is good and in some aspects outstanding. Children are settled, polite, confident and achieve well. The outstanding care and the good quality support provided by staff alongside thorough communication with parents underpins the excellent personal development and well-being of the children. Most children make good progress towards their Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning in relation to starting points. Some make outstanding progress and have begun more advanced programmes of study largely following the National Curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are promoted especially well. Careful organisation and imaginatively designed activities across the setting help the children to grow in confidence and independence and succeed as active learners. Structured play activities, such as 'family' role play in the nursery, foster children's imagination.
- 7.3 The overall personal development and well-being of the children are outstanding. Their response to learning contributes significantly to the good progress they make. Children are friendly and work well together, with enjoyment exemplifying the school's aim for each child to be a sociable, responsible citizen. Timetable restrictions in Reception classes limit access for some children in some activities. Children's numeracy, especially their counting skills are particularly well developed. Children explore and investigate their surroundings confidently and creatively. Children understand how to stay safe and are considerate of the safety of others. Regular hygiene routines, such as washing hands encourage children to adopt and maintain healthy habits. Most have a good understanding of the wider world, for example through discussing the purpose of a travel agency prior to further developing this theme through a role play area. They experiment successfully with technology, using a computer with well-planned interactive tasks. Children enjoy a healthy diet, eating well-balanced school lunches and regular portions of fruit and vegetables. Enjoyable outside activity in all weathers, and planned physical education lessons ensure the children have plenty of opportunity for physical exercise, and appreciate that this is important for their bodies. They show independence and inquisitiveness. During the recent snowy weather children investigated snow examining its properties with magnifying glasses and discovering ways in which it could be used to build a variety of objects. They delight in sharing what they have done, frequently drawing attention to their paintings and written work.
- 7.4 Staff know the children well and provide good support for their learning and development. The rooms and outdoor classrooms, suitably organised and well resourced, provide strong inspiration and motivation for a wide range of learning activities. Child-led activities are well-planned and ensure that children are challenged to think creatively and critically. Occasionally, when adults direct children's work too much or the purpose of the activities is

not identified clearly, progress is less rapid. Planning, although in different formats across the EYFS, is thorough covering all areas of learning. Reception planning successfully identifies assessment opportunities but there is no clear reference to outdoor play. There are many checks to track children's progress, but the information is not always used appropriately in planning to determine what each child needs to learn next. The recently established role for the key workers is beneficial for younger children. Parents who responded to the parental questionnaire and those spoken to during the inspection mostly expressed how happy they were with all areas of provision. A small minority of parents were not satisfied with information about their children's work and progress and expressed concern over work to do at home. However, as the school provides annually two written reports, three parents' evenings and invites parents to contact them at any time if they have concerns, the inspection did not find evidence to support this view. Homework cards in the Nursery are now being used in Reception and provide good opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and development.

- 7.5 Children's welfare is given high priority, and the setting is extremely effective in securing it. Excellent systems for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare are in evidence. The school nurse and two staff who are trained paediatric first aiders can be called upon for assistance when necessary. Procedures are secure for dealing with children who are unwell and for preventing the spread of infection. Staff are highly effective at teaching children routines about looking after themselves, and these establish good habits. Staff provide excellent role models, clearly demonstrating expectations about behaviour, and teaching good manners and consideration for each other; one child carefully explained how sorry she was to have upset her friend. Adults teach children about keeping safe when, for example, they talk about what to do if children get lost. Secure risk assessments are in place for indoor and outdoor activities.
- 7.6 Leadership and management is good and ensures that the very youngest children are provided with a good quality education. Efficiently maintained policies and procedures for the whole school have been reviewed and updated. Good links are established with local Early Years advisors who support professional development and provide regular quality checks. Teachers and assistants work well together although responsibility for planning children's learning and development is not fully shared. The setting regularly reviews its own practice.
- 7.7 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.8 To improve further the good quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. further develop the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that planning across the EYFS incorporates opportunities for outdoor play and the appropriate use of tracking information;
 2. extend the contribution of all staff in taking responsibility for planning children's learning and development.
- 7.9 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

