

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Hereford Cathedral Junior School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of the School	Hereford Cathedral Junior School
DCSF Number	884/6009
Early Years Number	EY339289
Registered Charity Number	518889
Address	28 Castle Street, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 2NW.
Telephone Number	01432 363511
Fax Number	01432 363515
Email Address	enquiries@hcjs.org
Headmaster	Mr Tim Wheeler
Chair of Governing Body	The Earl of Darnley
Age Range (of the whole school)	2 to 11
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	3rd to 6th November 2008
Head of Early Years Setting	Mrs Elizabeth Lord
Early Years Age Range	2 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	3rd to 4th November 2008

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 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by 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 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and 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

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Characteristics of the School	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION	3
	The Educational Experience Provided	3
	Pupils' Learning and Achievements.....	4
	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils	5
	The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment).....	7
3.	THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS	9
	The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils.....	9
	The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community	10
4.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	12
	The Quality of Governance	12
	The Quality of Leadership and Management	13
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	15
	Overall Conclusions	15
	Next Steps.....	15
6.	SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	16
	List of Inspectors	16
7.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)	17
	What the Setting Should Do to Improve	18
	Complaints Since the Last Inspection	18

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Hereford Cathedral School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from two to eighteen. There was reputed to be a school at Hereford Cathedral in the seventh century. Records show that Hereford Cathedral School was re-founded in 1384, making it one of the oldest schools in the country and one of the first to educate cathedral choristers. A separate preparatory school for boys was founded in 1898. Since being redesignated as a junior school after it was acquired by Hereford Cathedral School, the school has admitted girls and expanded its pupil numbers and its premises. It now provides a continuous education for boys and girls between the ages of two and eleven. It is located in the centre of the city of Hereford adjacent to Hereford Cathedral. The Nursery was opened in 1990 and boarding ceased in 2000. Hereford Cathedral School and Hereford Cathedral Junior School share a common governing body.
- 1.2 Most pupils come from professional families living in the city or within a convenient travelling distance from Hereford. The present headmaster and the deputy head have been in post for a very short time, both having started in September 2008. The school was last inspected in September 2002. The school states that it is still true to its original purpose in educating the cathedral choristers, twelve of whom attend the junior school, which is a member of the Choir Schools Association.
- 1.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) caters for children of Nursery and Reception age. The Nursery is housed in a separate building opposite the main junior school, whilst the Reception class is situated alongside Years 1 and 2 classes in a new, purpose-built building. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught mainly in the school's original building. The school includes Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in its pre-prep department and pupils from Years 3 to 6 in its prep department. The entire school from Nursery to Year 6 is known as the junior school. The EYFS classes in Nursery and Reception were inspected by a separate EYFS team and its findings are incorporated at the end of this report.
- 1.4 At the time of this inspection, the school had 296 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven. In Nursery there were 5 children attending full-time and 29 part-time. There are 24 pupils who have extra support for their learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). No children have a formal statement of special educational needs (SEN). No pupils use English as an additional language.
- 1.5 Entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is non-selective. Those pupils who join the school in Year 3 are interviewed by the headmaster and heard to read. A number of pupils enter the school at times other than at the start of their education. The school does not enter its pupils for the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the ages of seven or eleven. Each year contains a broad range of ability. Inspection evidence confirms that, within a broad spectrum, the average academic capability of pupils is in line with the national average for all maintained primary schools.
- 1.6 The school aims to provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment where children will encounter a distinctive ethos that will remain with them all their lives. Its prospectus also states that the school strives to encourage self-confidence and an enthusiasm for learning, alongside a sense of responsibility and consideration for others. It aims to both support and challenge, giving each child the opportunity to reach his or her full potential and to give everyone every chance to do their best. The school encapsulates its mission as being "an adventure for the mind and a home for the heart." In the last few years, recent developments

have included the provision of a multi-purpose sports hall, purpose-built accommodation for pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2, and refurbishment of the dining hall.

- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.
- 1.8 See Section 7 for the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The quality of the educational experience provided is good and is generally consistent with the school's overall aim to provide a broad-based education appropriate to pupils' needs. The quality of provision for children aged under five is also good. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the quality of its curriculum.
- 2.2 The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' progress in many areas of learning and a broad range of subjects is offered. In Years 1 and 2, the curriculum incorporates all of the National Curriculum subjects and, in addition, French, drama, religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). This offers pupils a broad and balanced programme of activities and a good range of opportunities for their personal development. There is specialist teaching, sometimes by externally-based experts, in French, music, physical education (PE), information and communications technology (ICT), RE, games and drama. In Years 3 to 6, the breadth of this curriculum is maintained but swimming is discontinued after Year 4. In Years 5 and 6, the three forms are set by ability into four English and mathematics sets.
- 2.3 In recent times, the school has addressed one of the main recommendations of the last inspection report, which was to improve planning for and provision of design and technology in Years 3 to 6. There are some imbalances in the curriculum and the school is planning an in-depth review of the time allocated to all subjects. In many lessons, pupils enjoy good opportunities to develop their speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy skills. ICT is taught sufficiently as a discrete subject from Year 1 to Year 6 but is not used enough in subjects across the curriculum.
- 2.4 Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is enriched with a very full range of popular extra-curricular activities, available before, during and after school. They number over forty and include calligraphy, film club, photography, sports activities, spelling club and many more. Pupils have access to a broad range of sports, through physical education and games. This includes many opportunities to represent the school in competitive fixtures in rugby, soccer, hockey, netball, cricket, rounders, athletics and cross-country running.
- 2.5 Pupils also have opportunities to enjoy a wide range of educational outings, trips to local places of historical interest, outward bound activities and many others. The religious education department organises visits to a Synagogue, a Greek Orthodox Church and a Sikh Gurdwara. The cathedral choir has just completed a tour of New England. Pupils speak about this with great excitement and enjoyment. Visitors, some of whom are parents, come into school to share their interests and expertise. Pupils benefit from hearing parents who are vets, dentists or in the armed forces, talk about their work.
- 2.6 Worthwhile links with the community have been forged which enrich pupils' educational experiences. Supporting charitable initiatives offers pupils greater insight into the lives of those less fortunate. Recently, the harvest appeal supported families in Bolivia and a fashion show is being organised to support the Little Princess Trust, a charity founded at the school to support children with cancer.
- 2.7 The school prepares pupils for transfer from Nursery to Reception and from Year 2 to Year 3 very effectively. Pupils can enjoy taster afternoons and information leaflets are issued to parents. Staff from Years 3 to 6 teach pupils in Years 1 and 2 and teachers from Years 2 and 3 also meet to facilitate a smooth transfer. There are also induction evenings and activity afternoons for pupils moving from Year 6 to the senior school. Links between staff in the

junior school and the senior school have been much enhanced in recent times. The attendance of the senior school special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) at the junior school spelling club is a good example of this. Managers place great emphasis on promoting stronger links between these two parts of Hereford Cathedral School.

- 2.8 Throughout the school, long- and medium-term planning is appropriate to pupils' needs. The wide range of activities provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Access to the National Curriculum is restricted at times for those pupils leaving lessons to participate in music or drama coaching. However, these lessons are rotated to minimise this and the core subjects are not disrupted overmuch.
- 2.9 Curricular provision for pupils with LDD is good. The SEN teacher and a team of teaching assistants provide effective support in classes or groups. Where necessary, pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional, individual help with the SENCO. Useful individual education plans (IEPs) with appropriate targets, which all staff are aware of, have been produced for these pupils. This ensures that they receive an education appropriate to their needs. A co-ordinator has recently been appointed to oversee the provision for gifted or talented pupils and provision for the more able is set to be enhanced further.
- 2.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.11 Pupils learn well and their achievements are good relative to their abilities. The standards of achievement and the quality of learning have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. The school is successful in achieving its core aims to enable pupils to develop and make progress in both educational and personal terms and to ensure that pupils' learning progresses in an effective and constructive way.
- 2.12 Pupils progress well. They show good knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects and activities they undertake and they apply these well. They think and act creatively. From the early years onwards, pupils show enthusiasm for their lessons and are keen to share ideas. They use technical terms, show good observational skills and record their findings thoroughly. Pupils pick up ideas on diction quickly in fast-paced music lessons. In a Year 2 design and technology lesson on puppet-making, pupils were quick to explain how the puppets worked. This informed their note-taking and observational drawing. Year 3 pupils explained the nature of sound waves during a scientific experiment. A Year 6 lesson for pupils with dyslexia showed them quickly grasping the significance of Macbeth's moral dilemma when he was accosted by the witches. They relished the different methods used by the teacher to explore this and contributed their own ideas with enthusiasm.
- 2.13 Pupils are articulate, keen to contribute to class discussions and courteous about the ideas of others. They are self-confident but not arrogant. They enjoy using the well-stocked library and discussing the books they read. Their writing is fluent. Pupils are confident in the use of mathematical concepts. They use appropriate language. In general, more able pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6, but this is not so consistent in Years 3 and 4. Pupils use ICT effectively in some lessons, for instance, in an English lesson on instructional writing but this is not consistent in other subjects. Internet access in the library is limited and this has the potential to hinder pupils' independent learning.

- 2.14 Pupils learn to think independently, to reason from given facts and to draw suitable conclusions from their findings. They show curiosity, evidenced by the quality of the questions they ask. Some begin to think beyond the obvious line of argument.
- 2.15 Standardised tests taken by pupils show that they usually achieve standards appropriate to their age and ability. They perform well in many subjects. However, assessments of ability in reading showed that boys do not read as well as girls.
- 2.16 Pupils do well in the entrance examinations to the senior school. Academic scholarships are gained on a regular basis. Six academic awards were won to Hereford Cathedral School in 2008, together with two sports and one 'all-rounder' scholarship.
- 2.17 Pupils perform very well in local and national competitions of an academic nature. Pupils have won awards in the national mathematics challenge in the last three years, and gained a gold medal in 2007. Pupils have had great success in scripture union competitions, gaining first place in both categories. Many individuals gain first or second prizes.
- 2.18 The school aims that pupils should excel beyond the classroom. This is outstandingly fulfilled in both sport and the arts. Success in team sports such as rugby is matched by competitions in music and drama. Many individuals have played for their counties or have won prizes in the Herefordshire Festival. The drama department provides good opportunities for pupils to excel in drama both inside and outside the school. A notable recent triumph was *The Demon Headmaster*, performed at the Courtyard, Hereford's professional theatre.
- 2.19 Pupils have performed well in Associated Board music examinations and in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art examinations for drama. The cathedral choristers have recently returned from an 11-day tour of the USA in which they were excellent ambassadors for both the cathedral and the school. Their commitment to singing in the choir is very strong and they practise for many hours outside lessons. Their musical talents are of high quality.
- 2.20 Pupils work effectively on their own and in groups. In a French lesson on how to name animals, pupils not only enjoyed themselves but supported each other in the process. Pupils also feel supported by staff. Their achievements are celebrated in assemblies, and in the weekly newsletter. House points and merit cards are awarded regularly for good work.
- 2.21 Pupils are polite to their teachers. They arrive promptly and settle to work quickly. In nearly all lessons pupils show evident enjoyment. For example, in a Year 4 RE lesson, pupils were all keen to join in discussing the emotional turmoil of Hannah when handing Samuel over to Eli.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.22 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school prospectus states that the school provides strong and successful support for the pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development. Inspection findings bear this out. The quality of provision has been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
- 2.23 Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They take part in many services and celebrations in the cathedral, including harvest, remembrance, Christingle and Christmas this term. The links between the cathedral and the school are good. Staff and clergy meet regularly and the dean and his colleagues occasionally take assemblies. This term the dean of the cathedral officiated at the installation ceremony for the new headmaster. RE lessons are carefully planned and provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on the major

world faiths. Visits to many different places of worship are well organized. Year 2 pupils in a PE lesson displayed wonder at a poem about night-time and bonfires, and then interpreted it through dance. Year 3 pupils in a music lesson learned a quiet hymn. Pupils were observed in an RE lesson discussing what they could conclude from Ruth's behaviour in the Bible story of Ruth and Naomi. In a Year 5 lesson on the English Reformation, pupils engaged in a mature debate about issues of religion and belief and the dilemmas such issues can create. Pupils develop spiritual awareness in other subjects also.

- 2.24 Pupils' moral awareness is outstanding. They develop a mature moral sensitivity, particularly with regard to how they treat each other. Staff are excellent role models. Pupils show respect for each other, for teachers and adults alike. Some think of the school as a team, others more as a big family with everyone looking out for each other. This is borne out in assemblies, in which there is a real sense of community. The behaviour of pupils in class, and whilst moving about the school, is often exemplary.
- 2.25 Pupils' social development is outstanding. The school successfully meets its aim to encourage a sense of responsibility in pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful whilst being relaxed and friendly. Year 6 pupils respond very well to the responsibility given to them in assisting with Years 1 and 2 classes at lunchtimes and indoor playtimes, or when operating the school library. Older and younger pupils interact well together in extra-curricular activities such as the string orchestra, the choir and competitive sports fixtures. Many pupils experience citizenship through belonging to an active school council. This comprises representatives from Years 2 to 6 and has recently brought about such changes as the goalposts being repainted and a rotation of football playing days.
- 2.26 Pupils' involvement with the community is exemplary in many ways. Most significant is the commitment of the choristers singing almost every day in the cathedral, with three services on Sunday. School choirs also sing at old people's homes and the local hospice at Christmas. The school hosts a 'grandparents' afternoon' each year, a very popular social event which includes a concert. Pupils participate actively in charity work. The Little Princess Trust was founded at the school and pupils are involved in this in many ways. For example, two Year 6 pupils raised £876 with a sponsored swim and Year 5 pupils created a fun school magazine *Junior Jumble* to raise money for charity. Other charities are also supported with this year's harvest appeal raising £1400 for Bolivian families, and the current 'Operation Christmas Child' shoebox appeal being very well supported.
- 2.27 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. It is developed through various activities both in and out of lessons. Pupils take part in the Herefordshire Festival of Music, Dance, Speech and Drama with great success and exhibit artwork in the cathedral's Artfest exhibition. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 participate in World Percussion Day and those in Years 3 to 6 in a Shakespeare day. These provide them with excellent cultural experiences. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic when learning about other cultures. They act out Greek dramas, compose and perform Chinese music and, in an art lesson about Arcimboldo, discover how the artist created portraits out of books, fruit and vegetables.
- 2.28 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.29 The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good with a minority of lessons being outstanding. This quality, together with the positive relationships between staff and pupils, is a significant factor in promoting pupils' learning. The quality of teaching throughout the school successfully meets its aims to enthuse pupils to learn and enables them to reach their full potential. Teaching quality has improved since the time of the last inspection.
- 2.30 Teaching is adapted well to meet the needs of most pupils and uses appropriate activities to promote learning. Overall, pupils are well supported, and this enables them to make progress according to their ability and to increase their understanding and develop their skills. For those pupils requiring extra support, well-defined procedures with appropriate priorities are clearly set out. These involve all teachers and learning support staff. Well constructed IEPs for pupils with LDD are in place and teachers take account of these in lessons.
- 2.31 Pupils are encouraged to think and learn for themselves, as was demonstrated in a Year 3 mathematics lesson where they took an active part in an investigation of fractions. Expectations in the best lessons are high. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In a Year 5 ICT lesson, pupils used a graphics programme to change photographic images to make a spot-the-difference game. Well-planned tasks and good questioning encourage pupils to think critically and learn for themselves.
- 2.32 The most effective teaching has very clear learning objectives. It provides pupils with well-organised and stimulating activities matched closely to their abilities, for example, in a music lesson where pupils took part in songs and learned about dynamics. Most teaching shows a good understanding of pupils' needs and aptitudes and work is well-planned. On occasion, more able pupils are not extended in their learning and their needs are not well met.
- 2.33 A strong feature of good teaching is the high quality of relationship between pupils and their teachers. This encourages responsible behaviour and an enjoyment of learning. For instance in a Year 6 English lesson, well illustrated teaching points and skilled questioning were used meaningfully to encourage good learning. Pupils report that their contributions are valued and encouraged.
- 2.34 Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subjects they teach and their explanations are clear. They translate their own enthusiasm into stimulating and informative lessons. They maintain pupils' interest in their work. Well-directed specialist teaching contributes significantly to pupils' achievements and progress in most areas of the curriculum.
- 2.35 Teachers use a good range of resources effectively and the library is well stocked and managed by pupils and teachers. Interactive whiteboards have been purchased and are used increasingly in some lessons to enhance teaching and learning. Further staff training in their use is being planned. The provision of some well-organised enrichment activities considerably strengthens pupils' learning. Teachers manage their classes well and maintain good standards of behaviour. Their enthusiasm and ambition for pupils to succeed are very apparent. They use praise and encouragement widely.
- 2.36 Throughout the school pupils' work is marked with helpful pointers for improvement. However on occasion there was little evidence to suggest that errors identified by teachers were corrected by pupils. Nevertheless corrections given verbally in class have a good effect.

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- 2.37 In Years 1 and 2, teachers use standardised tests in English and mathematics to inform and assess their planning of work for pupils. The test results are analysed and discussions take place between teachers to monitor individual pupils' progress.
- 2.38 In Years 3 to 6, assessment of pupils in English and mathematics is also by means of standardised tests and internally set examinations. These lead ultimately to the senior school entrance examination. Teachers are becoming more skilled at evaluating their assessments, and then using them to set targets for pupils' improvement.
- 2.39 Teachers are proficient at assessing how well pupils have understood concepts during lessons and use this knowledge well to plan what they teach next. However, there is little evaluation of the overall progress made in year groups, or of monitoring how well individuals progress from Year 1 to the end of Year 6. Assessment in subjects other than those needed for the senior school entrance examination is in its infancy and is currently being developed further.
- 2.40 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 The quality of pastoral care, guidance and support is outstanding. It successfully reflects the aims of the school to provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment. Thorough and effective measures are taken to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare, health and safety. The high quality of pastoral care highlighted in the previous inspection has been maintained.
- 3.2 Effective and structured pastoral care arrangements are well established. Form tutors have a good overview of pupils' academic progress and personal development. They provide high quality support for pupils in a friendly and relaxed manner, within a family environment. Detailed guidance in the staff handbook supports pastoral arrangements well.
- 3.3 Form tutors are responsible for the welfare of their pupils and all matters are treated seriously and handled sensitively. Frequent staff meetings are used to highlight any issues and to plan support for pupils. Concern forms are used throughout the junior school. Good quality guidance and care at each stage of pupils' education is also provided through form tutor time, and within PSHE lessons.
- 3.4 The staff treat pupils with respect and this enhances the positive, caring ethos and friendly atmosphere. Pupils understand they can turn to any member of staff when they have a problem. Pupils report that if they have a problem the teacher will sort it out in a caring and fair way. The choristers confirm that they are well cared for and they are proud of their achievements. However they also report that other members of the school community are not always aware of their extra workload.
- 3.5 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is a great strength. Pupils mix well and are friendly and considerate towards one another both in class and in the playground. They are encouraged to support and help each other and they do so willingly. Within the school house system, positive interaction between pupils is promoted well. Members of staff are caring about pupils and are quickly aware of any problems. Pastoral support is firstly the responsibility of the form tutor. Pupils identify with them as the person they would usually approach when seeking help and advice. The willingness of staff to help whenever necessary enables pupils to receive positive support and guidance.
- 3.6 The school's arrangements for promoting good behaviour are understood by pupils who consider the rules to be fair. Good manners, kindness and mutual respect are evident both in and out of lessons. Pupils regularly hold doors open for adults and are very helpful to others around school; for example, they escort visitors on tours of the school. Rewards and sanctions are understood by all pupils. Pupils know what is expected of them and explain what happens if they receive a yellow card. They are actively involved in the school council which meets regularly. Pupils see the manner in which minor behavioural concerns are handled as successful. Thorough attention is paid to the prevention of bullying and pupils are tolerant of each other in the playground.
- 3.7 The school takes every care to ensure pupils' health and well being. Healthy snacks are encouraged and pupils have access to fresh drinking water when required. Pupils are well supervised and arrangements to ensure their health and safety are successful. Child protection procedures are rigorous and thorough. Channels of support are clearly set out and regularly updated to include new requirements as they are introduced. A designated child protection officer has been appointed and trained. Good arrangements for pupils with LDD

- are in place and plans to deal with accessibility meet current guidance. Admissions and attendance registers are correctly maintained.
- 3.8 Measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are effective. Regular fire practices are properly recorded. Safety checks are routinely carried out on fire equipment and all electrical portable equipment, and appropriate records are kept.
- 3.9 Staff take appropriate measures to safeguard the health and safety of pupils. The school takes its responsibilities seriously in this respect. Risk assessments are regularly carried out with regard to premises, methods of work and school activities. Additionally, risk assessments are carried out for off-site visits and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.10 First aid procedures are good. A medical room managed by qualified school nurses is available should any pupil be taken ill when at school. Eight members of the teaching and two non-teaching staff have a basic first aid qualification and eleven have completed training to a higher level. Appropriate accident books and incident records are in place and accidents are recorded correctly. The pupils have an adequate choice of healthy options for lunch and portions are good. Staff are aware of any special dietary requirements.
- 3.11 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

- 3.12 The quality of links with parents and the community is good. The school has maintained the good links with parents and the community reported in the previous inspection and achieves its aims in this respect.
- 3.13 The response from parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire was positive. The great majority are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. Inspection findings concur with parents' positive views that an appropriate range of subjects is taught, that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and values and that the teaching helps their children make good progress. A significant minority of parents responded in the questionnaire that their concerns had not been handled well in the past. The headmaster is aware of this and has been prioritising these concerns.
- 3.14 A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the information sent out by the school. Inspection evidence did not support this view. The school provides good quality material for parents. Its website provides useful information and a regular and helpful newsletter, the *Junior Times*, keeps them up-to-date with events and achievements. Publications such as the school magazine and prospectus project an accurate impression of the school.
- 3.15 Parents receive much information about their children's academic work and progress. Written reports are issued at the end of the autumn and summer terms and progress grades are communicated in Years 3 to 6. The best evaluations are particularly helpful in suggesting how pupils might improve their work further. In Years 1 and 2, verbal reports are given to parents at the end of the autumn and spring terms and there are written reports at the end of the academic year. Open evenings are held each year and all pupils are issued with homework diaries. These inform parents about work to be done at home, and are used by staff and parents to communicate about schoolwork. Parents are welcomed into the school to discuss their children and the SEN teacher regularly meets with parents of children who are on the learning support register to review progress.

- 3.16 The parent teacher association (PTA) vigorously supports the school by organising social and fundraising events such as the firework party and the summer ball, the proceeds of which make a valuable contribution to school funds. They also support school functions such as organising the costumes for the school plays. The head meets with representatives from the PTA every month, to discuss issues of mutual interest.
- 3.17 Numerous worthwhile links exist with the community. Visitors make a valuable contribution to the curriculum and many visits are made to places of educational interest such as local museums and places of historic significance. The choristers sing not only in the cathedral, but also perform in local churches and schools. The school actively supports both local and international charities.
- 3.18 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 overall quality of governance is good. The governing body is well led and its effectiveness is ensured further by the wide range of professional skills and training that governors bring. These skills include in-depth knowledge of school inspection, school improvement, business, industry, law and finance. Governors take their roles to improve the quality of the school seriously and have evaluated their own contributions in order to improve them. They show promising signs of success this term in realising their aim to improve the junior school's educational direction and enhance further the links between the junior and senior parts of the school. Governors' relationships with staff and senior managers are positive as are formal links with the junior school's management. The effectiveness of governance for the junior school has improved over time since the last inspection.
- 4.2 The governing body has committees for education, finance, general purposes and salaries. This is increasingly effective for the junior school. It enables the senior management team of the junior school to lead staff and pupils forward in a positive way with the confidence that they have the support of a well-informed and sensitive governing body. Governors' meetings are carefully minuted and agreed and they have good working relationships with the headmaster of the junior school and his colleagues.
- 4.3 Governors seek to strike an effective balance between being supportive and acting as critical friends. They delegate executive powers to the senior management team of the junior school to manage it under the overall aegis of the headmaster of Hereford Cathedral School. Governors are closely involved in strategic planning. Strategic objectives are identified and appropriate actions taken. Primarily, these include the strengthening of links in teaching, learning and management between the junior and the senior school with a renewed emphasis upon a whole-school ethos as paramount. To this purpose, a new headmaster and deputy head of junior school were appointed this year and they are setting about improving provision with vigour.
- 4.4 Links with Hereford Cathedral continue to be strong, as they are with other organisations and individuals at local, regional, national and international levels. New purpose-built accommodation has been provided for Reception and Years 1 and 2, the shared dining hall has been refurbished, and the need for new indoor sports facilities has been addressed by the implementation of a planned building programme. The provision for children aged under five in the Nursery is good and the department is flourishing.
- 4.5 Full governing body meetings and committee meetings take place very regularly and are well attended. The headmaster of the junior school is a full member of the whole-school governing body and many of its committees. Members of staff make presentations to governors from time to time about their curricular contributions. A number of governors regularly attend school events, such as plays, concerts, sports fixtures and religious services.
- 4.6 Governors monitor all aspects of the school and have been much concerned in the past at the absence of an extended programme for staff of continuing professional development, appraisal or performance management. The junior school has not benefited from a rigorous system of internal monitoring and evaluation of teaching or standards for some years. Governors are addressing these issues urgently with the appointment of new senior managers who have the remit to improve matters swiftly. The governing body fulfils its

responsibilities conscientiously in monitoring health and safety and child protection and regularly reviews policies.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.7 The quality of leadership and management is good and many of the school's expressed aims are fulfilled increasingly well. The quality of leadership has been improved in many respects since the time of the last inspection. Even though the new leadership has been only recently established this term, there are strong, early signs that it is well placed to address school improvement in a timely and well-judged way.
- 4.8 The headmaster achieves a good balance between strategic, curricular and pastoral leadership, as do the senior management team. The school's leadership is well-organised, knowledgeable, purposeful and collegiate. It shares many expectations of how to improve the school further and shows much drive in achieving this. Key personnel with academic and pastoral responsibilities are involved more and more, although the burdens of leadership are not yet sufficiently delegated.
- 4.9 Senior managers lead and manage the school well and guide it in an imaginative educational direction. They are also closely involved in teaching and share a high profile around the school. The school's ethos is caring and happy and it has a distinctive curriculum with significant extra-curricular opportunities. Managers liaise often, both with each other and with the senior management team in the senior school, to ensure that school improvement is a continuous and corporate process. They show painstaking care and commitment for pupils and contribute to an ethos of mutual respect and support.
- 4.10 The school enjoys a happy and friendly atmosphere. Teachers ensure that pupils work and play in a disciplined, well-ordered family community. The staff has a strong blend of specialists in primary education as well as in a broad range of subjects.
- 4.11 Since the last inspection, progress had been slower than might be expected but in recent times a great deal is being achieved. The school's leadership has recently been restructured and strengthened further to good effect. The quality of consistently good teaching has improved considerably. Curricular links between Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 and between the junior and senior schools have also improved and are improving further. Resources, accommodation and facilities have improved although they are not yet as good in Years 3 to 6 as in the younger classes. In recent years, the school's numbers have risen steadily and it is not only popular in its immediate community but also in the wider local area.
- 4.12 The school derives its objectives for improvement from knowledgeable self-analysis. This autumn, senior managers and subject leaders are analysing its strengths and needs for the future in a perceptive and committed way. The school development plan is a key element in school improvement. It proclaims a common purpose to bring about closer integration of the junior and senior schools and a more co-ordinated approach towards the education of pupils from two to eighteen. It is, however, in gestation and has yet to be shared by a wide ownership. It shows a perceptive analysis of the key areas for school improvement. Although targets for improvement are accurately identified, timescales, dates of completion, success criteria and budgetary implications are not recorded.
- 4.13 It will build on initiatives already introduced, such as the creation of a new whole-school senior management team and the focus on improving standards of teaching and learning. It aims to create a middle management culture of responsibility and accountability and to

- encourage the spreading of best practice, including an improvement in ICT provision and its development across the curriculum.
- 4.14 Subject leaders have striven to improve their subjects further. They have developed and refined their policies and schemes of work. Their leadership is often good. The new headmaster is introducing a programme of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning as a key feature of development.
- 4.15 The school has well-qualified, committed and very hardworking staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The arrangements for recruiting any adult who might have contact with pupils are rigorous and pay due regard to government safety guidelines. Generally, the school has not supported staff enough with in-service training and that has been identified as an urgent, new priority in the coming year. More training, for example, is required in the use of ICT across the curriculum and the effective use of interactive whiteboards. The school encourages and supports newly qualified teachers with a programme of monitoring and time to reflect on good practice.
- 4.16 The system to appraise the work of teachers is in its infancy although senior managers know their staff increasingly well. The governing body also gives wholehearted support to the new headmaster in his many tasks. Senior managers and governors take into account the views of pupils, teachers and parents in their ongoing evaluations of progress. Teaching is monitored and evaluated through a regular, recently introduced programme. Lesson observations are made and evaluations are shared.
- 4.17 An influx of new teachers over the last six years, coupled with a blend of youth and experience in the staffroom, has had and is having a good effect upon teaching and learning. Consequently, the school benefits from many strengths in its staffing.
- 4.18 Staff are supported by clear and helpful, but recently introduced, policy documentation and guidelines. Administration is highly efficient and the school is very smoothly run. The school secretary and other administrative staff play a key part in this. Catering staff produce healthy meals which are nutritious and of good quality.
- 4.19 Teaching is enhanced by the quality of specialist facilities such as for ICT and physical education. Sports facilities include many games pitches and fields plus good, purpose-built accommodation for Years 1 and 2. However, some teaching areas such as those for art, science, music and drama do not have enough room. Despite this, teachers inspire their pupils to achieve well. Displays of pupils' work in classrooms, hallways and corridors are being improved this term.
- 4.20 The financial management of the bursar and his staff is excellent, being linked closely to educational priorities. It is effective in ensuring that the school now has good resources. The school has benefited from careful financial husbandry over the last five years that has seen it secure a healthy financial basis for future development. The beautifully-appointed grounds are suitable for the educational needs of pupils and are well maintained by caretaking staff.
- 4.21 The school meets all the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.22 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school meets its aims and aspirations in many regards. It prepares its pupils thoroughly for the next stage in their lives and their future well-being. Their achievements are often good relative to their abilities. Pupils acquire well-rounded knowledge, understanding and skills in many subjects and develop confidence and sometimes maturity in their personal lives. The school provides a broad and varied educational experience. The provision for children aged under five is good. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy a caring and happy family ethos. They enjoy coming to school and often show excellent attitudes to learning. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The choristers make an outstanding contribution to the school and the cathedral. Most parents are pleased with the school's provision for their children and the links with them are good. Pastoral care is outstanding. The overall quality of leadership and management is good, as is the quality of teaching and governance.
- 5.2 The headmaster, senior managers and staff have improved standards and broadened the learning experience in recent times. The school has made good improvements as a result of the reshaping of the senior management and the good leadership of the headmaster and his team. The school has identified the need to improve its pupils' standards in the use of ICT in other subjects as well as the achievements of more able pupils. It has good plans to improve further its sports and art facilities.
- 5.3 The school meets all regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 Within the context of a school that has made significant improvements since the last inspection, the following recommendations are made to improve further:
1. raise standards in the cross-curricular use of ICT as well as for more able or talented pupils;
 2. continue to develop a school development plan which includes priorities over the short and long term, timescales, success criteria, budgetary implications and accountable personnel;
 3. continue with the planned review of the curriculum to ensure that it is rich, broad and balanced, and fully meets the school's aims;
 4. develop systems with which to monitor pupils' progress over time and analyse attainment across the school;
 5. introduce a rigorous system of performance management and expanded in-service training.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 3rd to 6th November 2008. 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 3rd and 4th November 2008 by two inspectors. The inspectors 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 inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr Rob Isaac	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Janice Booker	Head, GSA/ISA school
Mr Stephen Buglass	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Pamela Craig	Head, IAPS school
Mr Andrew Dobbin	Head, IAPS school
Mr Graham Nunn	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Sally Gray	Early Years Team Inspector

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

- 7.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of a Nursery and three Reception classes. The Reception classes are accommodated in a building with Years 1 and 2, opened in 2003. The Nursery is in a separate building. Nursery children begin school on a part-time basis in the September before their third birthday. All children in the Nursery attend on either a part-time or full-time basis. All Reception children attend full-time. Overall, 32 children attend full-time and 30 part-time, with almost an equal number of boys and girls. Each group has a qualified teacher assisted by suitably qualified assistants. Subjects, such as French, are taught by specialist teachers. The aim of the EYFS is to produce confident, self-resilient, self-assured children who are given every opportunity to develop to their full potential.
- 7.2 The EYFS provision is good overall with some aspects being particularly good. The setting provides children with a good start to their education, recognising that each child is unique and catering for each child's individual development. Leadership and management are particularly good and this, together with effective planning and teaching contribute significantly to the success. The provision for children's personal development is good, being underpinned by high quality provision for their welfare. Parents are exceptionally positive in their evaluation of the EYFS.
- 7.3 Children entering the Nursery have a broad spread of ability with attainment overall being about average. A significant amount of good teaching ensures their good progress towards the goals expected. This continues throughout the Reception classes. By the end of Reception, most children attain the Early Learning Goals with many exceeding them. Children work well individually or in groups. Their literacy and numeracy skills are developing well, particularly their early reading skills. Children are confident when given the opportunity to explore their environment, being creative when using different media and materials. Displays, such as the 'fireworks' display in the Nursery, exemplify this.
- 7.4 Children's personal development is good. They consider others' safety and understand well how to stay safe. They realise the importance of staying healthy through choices available at lunchtime. Children know why they need to wash their hands after 'messy activities' in order to stay healthy. They enjoy learning and, when given the opportunity, making choices. They answer questions keenly, pay attention and are increasingly confident when answering. Teachers value children's contributions and celebrate their achievements. Children are friendly having excellent relationships with each other and with adults. Most have a good understanding of the world outside school.
- 7.5 Children are helped to learn and develop well. Staff provide good support for children's learning and know them particularly well. Indoor areas are appropriately resourced and organised and provide motivation for a wide range of activities. Outdoor learning areas are less satisfactory and, in spite of the best efforts of staff, do not provide a sufficiently stimulating environment. Children's work is well planned by the teachers although insufficient opportunities are made available for them to be active, inquisitive and independent learners. Some teaching is of high quality and children are appropriately challenged. They are enthusiastic participants in their learning. Appropriate assessments are used to plan children's learning and staff meet regularly to plan children's progress. Children with learning difficulties receive good additional help. Strong relationships between parents and staff ensure that everyone involved in children's care and education is well informed. As one parent said, "All staff are fantastic with the children; this is a very caring environment."

- 7.6 Provision for children's welfare is particularly good. They benefit from a safe, secure and generally well-maintained environment. Each child's 'special person' takes pride in their care and development and regularly shares information with that child's parents. Detailed risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed. Good procedures exist for the safe arrival and collection of the children. Children use the outdoor play areas safely. Systematic processes are in place for unwell children. Their welfare is safeguarded further by comprehensive child protection procedures. Children respond well to the setting's rules realising that all behaviour has consequences.
- 7.7 Leadership and management are of good quality being reflected in children's positive response and progress. Planning and everyday management are good. Resources are well used. Staff work exceptionally hard to create a stimulating learning environment. However, the Nursery building and outdoor learning areas need considerable refurbishment. Well-qualified staff have high expectations and are competent and caring. They work well as a team. The monitoring of teaching is developing well. Professional development opportunities are good and outcomes are well used for continued improvements. Inclusive practice ensures that all children have their welfare needs met and achieve their potential, regardless of background.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.8 To improve further the good quality of provision the setting should:
1. further develop opportunities for outdoor learning and incorporate these into the overall planning;
 2. create more opportunities for children to be active, inquisitive and independent learners;
 3. implement design plans to create an effective outdoor learning environment, particularly in the Nursery, as well as for the ongoing refurbishment of that building.
- 7.9 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

Complaints Since the Last Inspection

- 7.10 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require any action to meet national requirements.