

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Putney Park School

Full Name of the School	Putney Park School
DCSF Number	212/6203
Registered Charity Number	N/A
Address	11 Woodborough Road, Putney, London SW15 6PY.
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Headmistress	Mrs Ruth Mann
Proprietor	Putney Park School Ltd Managing Director, Mr Brian Tweedie-Smith
Age Range (of the whole school)	4 to 16
Gender	Mixed 4 to 8; Girls 8 to 16
Inspection Dates	3rd to 6th November 2008
Head of Early Years Setting	Mrs Ruth Mottram
Early Years Age Range	4 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	15th to 16th September 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 inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any

significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Putney Park School was founded in 1953 by Miss Jean Tweedie-Smith. Her nephew, Mr Brian Tweedie-Smith, is now the managing director of the company which owns the school and is the school's principal. The school occupies four large Edwardian houses in a quiet conservation area in Putney. The acre of gardens provides space for both outdoor play and relaxation. Recent developments include a new building for French and Spanish, the creation of a new drama studio and a covered area in the Reception playground. Specialist rooms used by Lower and Upper School pupils include provision for art, drama, music, home economics, information and communication technology (ICT) and laboratories for biology, chemistry and physics. The present headmistress was appointed three years ago and she has put in place a senior management team (SMT) with specific responsibilities in the running of the school.
- 1.2 Putney Park School aims to give each pupil a sound education in a happy atmosphere, to enable all pupils to discover and develop their individual strengths and to encourage high achievement and academic success. The school sets out to create a community which puts a high value on courtesy and mutual respect, whilst preparing pupils to meet the challenges of the future. The school also aims to offer a broad curriculum and the opportunity to develop creativity and individual talents within small classes taught by teachers who understand their pupils' individual needs. The school motto "Rewards flow from hard work" sums up the school's ethos and expectations of the pupils. The school maintains a strong Christian tradition but welcomes pupils of other faiths.
- 1.3 The school currently has 250 pupils on roll, including in the Lower School 40 boys between the ages of 4 and 8, and 66 girls of the same age, and 23 girls between the ages of 8 and 10, and in the Upper School 121 girls between the ages of 10 and 16. Most boys leave at the end of Year 2, having taken the 7+ exam. Approximately one-third of girls leave at the end of Year 6. The majority of pupils who leave at the end of Year 6 or Year 11 gain entrance to local schools, many of which are selective.
- 1.4 Both boys and girls join the school at Reception. The entry process includes a morning visit and consideration of a report from any previous school or nursery attended. From Year 3, places are offered to girls on the results of entrance examinations and reports from previous schools. A further intake of girls joins in Year 7, following entrance examinations held at the school in January each year. Current Year 6 pupils are also required to take this entrance examination. At other times, places may be offered to pupils who have been registered on the waiting list.
- 1.5 The results of nationally standardised tests taken by pupils on entry to the school in Reception and Year 7, and the results of tests taken in Year 9 for the last three years, show that pupils have a wide range of abilities; the overall ability profile is above the national average. If older pupils perform in line with their abilities, results in public examinations will be above the average for all maintained secondary schools. The school currently has identified 59 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD); of these 32 have some extra tuition. This number includes four pupils who have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). The school is accredited with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils. Twenty-seven nationalities are represented in the school with pupils from across the world, including Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Japan, Korea, India and Pakistan. Sixty-one pupils have English as an additional language (EAL); although the majority of these speak good English, eleven receive specialist tuition.

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- 1.6 The school has arrangements to use a number of local sporting facilities. Games lessons take place at a large sports ground which offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor facilities and is a short coach journey away. Swimming lessons take place at a local leisure centre which has a main 30m pool and a training pool for beginners. Pupils are also able to use the gym at the leisure centre. Rowing takes place on the Thames at a centre which also has an indoor tank and indoor rowing equipment.
- 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 throughout the school is good and provides a stimulating range of opportunities suited to the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Significant improvements have been made in the structure and monitoring of the curriculum since the last inspection. The school successfully achieves its principle aim to provide each pupil with a sound education in a happy atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged to discover and develop their individual strengths and to strive for high achievement and academic success.
- 2.2 Throughout the school, pupils' education gives them experience in and contributes effectively to their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. It provides well for the acquisition of skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. This was evident in lessons in all sections of the school. The educational experience is further supported by extra-curricular visits for all age groups to local places of historic and cultural interest. The Lower School curriculum is broad and balanced, provides many opportunities to develop pupils' skills and encourages individual learning. Pupils' experiences are enriched by a number of themed days and weeks in the Lower School curriculum. These include Book Week, Arts Week and International Food Day, each of which reflects the cultural diversity of the school. All of these opportunities help pupils to learn. A Science Week is also planned in the future. These opportunities continue in the Upper School where a good range of subjects is available. Some setting of teaching groups helps to ensure suitable provision for pupils of all abilities including those who are gifted and talented. At GCSE a wide range of option combinations is offered and the school will personalise options for each pupil to accommodate individual choices.
- 2.3 The programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) reflects the school's aims and ethos with its emphasis on fulfilling the needs of individual pupils, and it is a strength of the school. School life is enriched by extra-curricular activities and some links with the community. Pupils in Year 10 have the opportunity to participate in work experience which is supported and assisted by the local authority.
- 2.4 Since the last inspection, extra-curricular activities have continued to contribute to pupils' personal development. Pupils in the Lower School participate enthusiastically in the good range of activities offered. Pupils in the Upper School benefit from a good variety of sporting opportunities and enjoy the small range of creative activities they are offered. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has recently been re-introduced in the Upper School.
- 2.5 At all levels, due care and attention are given to preparing pupils for the next stage of education, training, employment and for adult life. A variety of initiatives helps pupils move on with confidence to the next stage of their education. Staff ensure that all available information is passed on when pupils move on from Lower to Upper School. The transition is also helped by some continuity as a number of staff teach in both sections of the school. The Upper School staff run a comprehensive 'future schools' programme to help Year 11 pupils prepare for the transfer to the sixth form.
- 2.6 Curriculum planning is good and has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and promotes participation in a wide range of subjects. Medium-term planning at departmental level is variable in quality although the best planning sets out dove-tailed plans across the age range to ensure that all

the various aspects of the subject are covered, including provision for the most able. Careful lesson planning and the integration of a wide range of teaching styles ensure that all pupils, including those with LDD, are able to access the full curriculum and are encouraged to take a full part in school life.

- 2.7 The school meets the curriculum needs of all pupils requiring learning support, including those with EAL. Provision is excellent for pupils with a statement of special educational needs and these pupils are able to access an appropriate curriculum. Great care is taken to support pupils with LDD. All teachers are given appropriate support and guidance by the special educational needs co-ordinator in meeting the needs of these groups of pupils. Individual education plans (IEPs) are drawn up to meet the needs of individual pupils and provide clear targets for their improvement. Their progress is closely monitored and the school uses annual reviews to discuss this progress and to guide future planning. The progress of gifted pupils is monitored through the tracking system and some special provision is made when appropriate. For example, some girls take GCSE mathematics a year early and move on to more challenging work in preparation for AS level.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 At all ages and for all abilities, the standard of pupils' learning and achievement is good. Lessons meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, ensuring that they are learning in a secure, happy environment where they can succeed, thus fulfilling the school's aim and maintaining the standards noted in the last inspection report.
- 2.10 Since the last inspection, outstanding progress has been made in ICT provision and this has a significant impact on learning throughout the school. Pupils use ICT in all areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 have consolidated their work on transport by making talking books using their own voices. Pupils in Year 9 have researched the life of a soldier in World War 1 and made impressive presentations using an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate their learning. For all age groups, learning using ICT is of a high standard. Access to good research facilities in ICT is supplemented by the wide selection of books in the Lower School library and some useful reference books in the Upper School, which are kept in departmental teaching rooms. A small selection of fiction for the Upper School is available in a classroom but, as was noted in the previous inspection report, levels of borrowing are low, which limits the profile of reading in the school.
- 2.11 Pupils acquire good levels of knowledge and skill for work and study, seen not only in their books and lessons, but in the attractive displays of work around the school. Pupils display creative thinking and understanding across the curriculum. In a Year 2 art lesson, pupils designed and made clay 'boxes of delights' linked to literacy work on the topic. Pupils' critical thinking skills are developed as they evaluate their own learning. In the Lower School, pupils use an appropriate colour-coded system, called the 'traffic light system', to evaluate individual pieces of work and they record their learning in diaries. In the Upper School, critical thinking is used in self-assessment at the end of topics within individual subjects. Peer evaluation also consolidates learning, for example in a Year 3 geography lesson where pupils commented maturely and constructively on the work of their partners.
- 2.12 At all ages pupils express their ideas articulately, and they listen and respond well to each other both in lessons and elsewhere. Standards of literacy are high and pupils express ideas persuasively in writing. Work on the Tudors by pupils in Year 5 included extended writing of a high standard and pupils in Year 9 wrote well-argued business letters. The standards of

handwriting and presentation of work throughout the school are good. Pupils are mathematically competent and apply their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum. For instance, younger pupils made fairy cakes which involved weighing and measuring the ingredients and Year 6 pupils made Christmas cards in counted cross stitch following patterns on squared paper. Attainment in all areas is good and there are no significant differences in relative attainment between different groups of pupils, subjects or curriculum areas.

- 2.13 Pupils achieve well in national tests, public examinations and standardised measures of progress. Significant progress is demonstrated in Years 1 and 2. In the national tests at the age of eleven, over the last three years for which results are available, pupils performed above the national average for all maintained primary schools and were therefore in line with their abilities. At the age of fourteen and at GCSE, their results were well above the average for all maintained secondary schools and therefore good for their abilities.
- 2.14 Groups of pupils participate in activities outside school, particularly sports fixtures against other schools; they enjoy representing their school and have a good measure of success. Pupils from Years 6 to 9 participate in the charitable CLIC Sargent Concert at the Royal Albert Hall; a high standard of choral singing was attained in the rehearsals seen. Able mathematicians in Year 9 benefit from the challenge offered in the Royal Institute of Mathematics Master Classes. Year 7 and 8 pupils participate in the United Kingdom Mathematics Challenge and achieve well.
- 2.15 Pupils are competent at taking notes, studying and organising their work independently. Younger pupils use learning cards to help them to be independent learners and pupils from Years 6 to 11 benefit from timetabled study skills sessions. Effective note taking was seen in a Year 9 history lesson where pupils were given a variety of useful strategies to ensure that key points were noted.
- 2.16 Pupils of all ages demonstrated the ability to work co-operatively with others and in teams. Whether working in pairs or groups, pupils of all ages collaborated well and willingly helped each other, as in a Year 2 ICT lesson where they provided assistance, without prompting, in a quiet and unfussy manner. In the Lower School, the system of learning partners successfully encouraged pupils to co-operate and share ideas. In Year 8, pupils were working well in groups; in mathematics, teams selected from a range of topics to produce presentations for their own and other classes. In an ICT lesson, pupils worked well in groups to refine a programme to steer a robotic car around a complex track.
- 2.17 Throughout the school, pupils settle in lessons quickly, apply themselves and persevere. Good relationships continue between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves, as was noted in the previous inspection report. Because lessons are carefully planned, pupils expect to be successful and they enjoy their work and activities. A Year 3 girl, when asked which lessons she liked best, replied: "all of them".

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.18 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall and is strongly assisted by respectful but friendly relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves. Pupils of all ages are confident and polite. Through careful nurturing the school achieves its aim to foster a sense of traditional values based on courtesy and mutual respect, which was observed throughout the inspection. The result is a clear sense of shared community throughout the school, which was evident particularly throughout the interviews with pupils. One pupil, who had joined the school in Reception and who was now in Year 11, described the school as “like home”.
- 2.19 Since the last inspection, the quality of provision has been improved by the introduction of the well-planned personal, social and health education programme from Reception to Year 10, linked to themed assemblies and limited provision of religious education (RE) lessons. As noted in the last inspection report, the absence of RE for Year 11 restricts the opportunities provided for spiritual awareness and growth, despite the school’s broadly Christian ethos. Themes from PSHE are followed up in tutorial lessons for Year 11 pupils alongside the ‘future schools’ programme which prepares these pupils very thoroughly for the next stage of their education.
- 2.20 The spiritual development of pupils is good. In the Upper School it is promoted through curriculum subjects where opportunities for exploring personal ideas and for discussion result in positive self-esteem and self-confidence. In drama and English for example, pupils explore responses and show empathy. A Year 11 class used role-play and discussion to develop their understanding of and personal responses to the death of the main character in *Death of a Salesman*. In a Year 9 assembly for Remembrance Day, drama, music, prayers, and hymns were integrated into a powerful, accessible and empathetic occasion. Pupils enjoyed participating and the opportunity for quiet reflection. A Lower School assembly by Year 2 of work about the Tudors gave the opportunity for joyful singing, with pupils and staff sharing a strong sense of community. In the Lower School, other religions and their festivals are explored in RE lessons and there are visits to, or videos about, mosques and synagogues. Pupils enjoy these personal experiences of places of worship and also of school services in a local church.
- 2.21 Pupils’ moral development is good. From an early age they know the difference between right and wrong. ‘Golden rules’ are established for Reception to Year 2, setting out basic aspects of behaviour, and teachers use a yellow and red card system for sanctions very effectively. Pupils can make balanced judgements; for example in discussion they said they feel their school rules are fair. Awards are made in assembly for pupils who have improved behaviour. In a PSHE lesson, Year 8 discussed age-related laws and showed a good grasp of the issues. Pupils understand the needs of others and help to raise money for charities for children with disabilities.
- 2.22 Pupils develop well socially. As soon as they start school, they learn to share, take turns and work with each other. As they progress, they learn to work well in pairs or small groups and to take responsibility for themselves and others, for example by holding office as a sports captain, prefect, or representative on the school council. These positions are taken seriously by all concerned. In both PSHE and other subjects, pupils develop social awareness; good examples were seen in Year 10 science books on the effects of alcohol, drugs and diet. The theme of public institutions and services is followed through PSHE lessons; a Year 8 class showed a good understanding of the workings of Parliament. The introduction of drama into the curriculum has greatly increased pupils’ self-confidence and willingness to join in discussion, and has helped to promote good social interaction, leadership skills and

consideration for others. In the Lower School, the advent of drama has encouraged pupils to understand each other better. In the Upper School, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has recently been re-established for girls in Years 10 and 11, to foster community service, leadership skills and to offer physical challenges.

- 2.23 Pupils' cultural awareness is good. Pupils develop an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures through art, music and drama productions in school, and visits to galleries, museums and historical monuments. They learn about other cultures and religious festivals, such as Divali and Eid, in RE and PSHE, and also through school events such as the International Food Day. Curriculum subjects such as geography and topics such as the 'Literature of Other Cultures' component of GCSE English are used by teachers to develop cross-cultural understanding. Pupils from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds are well integrated into the school and their presence is actively appreciated. Lower School parents and other family members are active in bringing in national food or costumes on feast days.
- 2.24 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.25 Teaching, as at the last inspection, is good throughout the school. It was rarely less than satisfactory and was excellent in a significant proportion of the lessons seen. Experienced, caring staff prepare stimulating and varied lessons which enable pupils of all abilities to learn efficiently and enjoyably, fulfilling the school's aim to provide a sound education in a happy atmosphere.
- 2.26 There have been major improvements in assessment and its use since the last inspection, when this was judged to be inconsistent. At that time no use was made of assessment to track progress or plan future work. It now informs planning and teaching, effectively supported by ICT provision, and so contributes to the progress and achievement of all pupils. Assessment is now excellent and is a significant strength of the school.
- 2.27 ICT now makes a notable contribution to school life, providing rich and creative opportunities for learning across the curriculum. This represents a significant improvement, as the use of ICT to support and enhance learning was weak at the last inspection.
- 2.28 Teaching enables pupils of all abilities to learn, to make progress in their understanding and to increase their skills. Teachers know their pupils well and adapt their planning and delivery of lessons to make them accessible and appropriate to all in their classes. Pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified efficiently and staff are well informed with details of their needs in the classroom. They receive appropriate support in lessons, so enabling them to make good progress.
- 2.29 Assessment information is used to identify more able pupils. Teachers are encouraged to offer such pupils extension work with additional challenges and there are some examples of good practice, for example in art and mathematics, where some able pupils sit GCSE early, and go on to further study such as AS-level work.
- 2.30 Teaching across the school encourages pupils to apply themselves conscientiously to their work, whether intellectual, physical or creative. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and pupils respond positively to this. Lessons are orderly and focused on the task in hand. Teachers encourage pupils to do their best, whatever the task, and pupils respond by applying themselves to their work. Younger pupils have learning partners and encourage each other in

their work, so helping them to learn for themselves. Lessons are well planned and varied in both approach and activities so that pupils' interest is maintained and they enjoy their lessons. This was seen, for example, in a Year 8 Spanish lesson conducted entirely in Spanish; pupils participated enthusiastically and fluently in a vocabulary exercise, using an interactive whiteboard.

- 2.31 There are many examples of good practice in lesson planning. An excellent lesson plan for Year 3 on writing instructions included different activities for pupils with LDD or statements of SEN, including the use of the computer to record notes, comprehensive plans for the efficient deployment of the teaching assistant and a risk assessment of the activities.
- 2.32 Teachers use a variety of approaches and activities to engage pupils. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson pupils used drama to help them empathise with the historical characters they were studying. Most lessons seen maintained a good pace and the lesson time is used effectively.
- 2.33 All staff know their pupils very well. They use reports from previous schools and contact previous teachers when taking on new pupils. They use information on how pupils learn best, their strengths and weaknesses, and LDD and statements of SEN to inform their planning and classroom practice. The whole-school tracking system collects all the available assessment data. This information is used by staff to inform their lesson planning, their expectations of individual pupils and to set appropriate targets.
- 2.34 Teachers demonstrate a command of their subject matter, sometimes ranging beyond the requirements of the syllabus, as in Year 11 biology where complex issues of genetics were discussed with a class whose interest had been aroused by a discussion of inherited characteristics.
- 2.35 In most areas of the school, teachers are well resourced for their subject teaching and increasingly well supported by ICT. Most rooms have interactive whiteboards and many staff use this technology to enrich their teaching and to interest and inform pupils. For example, a Year 5 French class enjoyed exploring the vocabulary of places using the interactive board.
- 2.36 The standard of marking is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers mark regularly and thoroughly, highlighting good work and making specific suggestions for further development. Pupils appreciate this and say it helps them to progress. Teachers assess informally within the classroom, giving immediate individual feedback to pupils to enable progress to continue. They also assess formally on a regular basis using the results to inform their future planning, and they discuss the implications of their assessments with other staff to gain a fuller picture of pupils' progress.
- 2.37 The members of the senior management team collate standardised test results throughout the school. They compare current progress against past performance and the predictions obtained from standardised test results in order to identify pupils who are not maintaining the progress expected of them. These pupils are then discussed in staff meetings for investigation and action. With older pupils, test predictions based on nationally standardised tests are also used to help them make GCSE option choices and then to set targets for progress towards GCSE. Year 11 pupils are encouraged to choose mentors from the teaching staff, to help them achieve their targets and maintain progress. Careful records show that this initiative is improving pupils' performance.

- 2.38 The school aims to foster high achievement and academic success, and the work of teachers plays a significant part in achieving these aims. Pupils benefit from thoughtfully planned lessons which are delivered by well-informed and caring teachers who know them individually. Teachers incorporate a variety of styles of learning into lessons and tailor them to suit individuals, including those with LDD or statements of SEN. This enables all pupils to fulfil their potential and frequently to exceed expectations in what they achieve.
- 2.39 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 school provides outstanding pastoral care, and outstandingly well for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. This aspect of the school has been strengthened since the last inspection. The caring and supportive ethos of the school is strongly evident and it ensures that the school's pastoral aims are met fully. The parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were extremely positive about the quality of pastoral care. Parents expressed their appreciation of the personal care and support offered at all levels. Pupils said they feel welcome, happy and well cared for.
- 3.2 The staff provide excellent support and guidance for all pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well; in turn, pupils feel able to approach any member of staff should they have an issue, in the knowledge that they will be provided with whatever help is needed. In discussions with pupils, it was clear that they feel safe in a caring, family atmosphere.
- 3.3 The care of staff for pupils' welfare is underpinned effectively by well-documented arrangements. Staff receive clear guidelines for their work in pastoral care, support and guidance. Pupils understand the procedures and appreciate them. They are encouraged to perform well through praise and the system of rewards, and were keen to explain how the system worked. Classroom rules are understood by the pupils, some of whom have their own targets displayed for all to see. Effective lines of communication ensure that all staff are fully aware of procedures and kept up-to-date on matters to do with individual pupils.
- 3.4 The focus on encouragement and positive reinforcement ensures that the quality of relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves is excellent, with mutual respect and trust clearly featuring throughout. Pupils have a strong sense of community and help each other. The atmosphere and ethos of the school are such that pupils flourish.
- 3.5 School policies and procedures are effective in promoting good discipline and behaviour. The excellent behaviour shown by pupils in and around the school reflects well on the manner in which the school's aims and values are promoted amongst the whole community. From an early age, pupils are aware of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Their personal diary contains clear information about school rules, expectations, anti-bullying matters, rewards and health and safety. A clear and appropriate anti-bullying policy is in place. Pupils are confident that, if necessary, measures to protect them from harassment or bullying will be implemented sensitively and fairly. The use of a professional, specialist service for whole-school training for staff and for pupils supports the anti-bullying procedures.
- 3.6 The school has highly effective policies for dealing with any child protection issues that might arise and these are clearly understood by all staff. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and regular training ensures that they are updated on all new initiatives. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Regular fire evacuation practices are well organised and properly recorded. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and acted upon, including those for activities in and out of school. Of particular note is the risk assessment for younger children bringing in food for cookery which must be free from nuts.

- 3.7 Comprehensive arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are in place and plans to deal with accessibility meet current guidelines. Attendance and admission registers are maintained correctly and accurately. Effective procedures are established to follow up any unexplained absences.
- 3.8 Health care of the pupils is excellent. The school has thorough arrangements for first aid, with a clear and helpful first aid policy. Pupils' health needs are recorded carefully. Several members of staff are trained to give emergency first aid. School meals are of good quality, prepared in hygienic conditions and eaten in suitable accommodation. The catering department provides attractive and healthy food. Pupils are able to select whether they have a school lunch or bring their own. Lunch is a well-supervised and pleasant occasion. The school promotes healthy eating and the pupils are encouraged to eat a balanced diet. Pupils bring in snacks of fruit and vegetables; drinking water is always available throughout the day. All pupils have plenty of opportunities for taking regular exercise within the physical education programme. They also take part in the 'Walk Once a Week to School' initiative and the 'Wake Up and Shake Up' programme.
- 3.9 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

- 3.10 Links with parents and the community are good overall. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to establish positive relationships with parents. Good links with the community are continuing to develop; in particular, links have been strengthened since the last inspection by the relationships with two local schools.
- 3.11 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire demonstrated the effectiveness of the relationship between school and parents. A substantial majority of parents expressed great satisfaction with the progress their children were making and thought that the school promoted worthwhile attitudes. A small proportion of parents felt there was too little opportunity to be involved in the life of the school; however, the inspection team found no evidence to support this. The school is thoroughly responsive to parental concerns.
- 3.12 Parents are well informed about all aspects of school life. The prospectus contains clear and accurate information about the school's aims, ethos and curriculum. The new website is a good and growing source of information. A helpful booklet of information is provided annually to parents of all pupils from Reception through to Year 7. The headmistress's letters to parents provide updates throughout the year. The annual school magazine showcases achievements and provides further useful information.
- 3.13 Parents have regular opportunities for both informal and formal discussions with staff about pupils' progress. One evening a year is used for formal discussion of academic progress for each year group in the Upper School and two evenings a year are offered to parents with pupils in the Lower School. Lower School class teachers maintain effective communication with parents through helpful reading record books and parents are invited in to view pupils' work and classroom displays on a regular basis.
- 3.14 Formal reports on all pupils are provided, once a year for pupils in the Lower School and twice a year for the Upper School. These reports are of a uniform layout and inform parents of the topics covered, with effort and attainment clearly graded on the school's own system which is set out at the front of all reports. Although subject reports do not give an indication

of how pupils might improve or set targets, the form teacher's comment and the headmistress's comment do include suggestions for improvement.

- 3.15 Parents are well informed and supported in making decisions. Year 9 parents are invited to a meeting to discuss GCSE options, and an evening is held for the parents of Year 10 pupils offering information on possible choices of future schools. The school also gives much good advice to parents on an individual basis. The headmistress advises parents on future schools for pupils at the end of Years 2, 3, and 6 and again at Year 11, to prepare pupils for departure to the next stage of their education.
- 3.16 The Friends of Putney Park School group is an active association that has been recently revitalised with a clear set of objectives circulated to all parents. There are parent representatives for many classes. The Friends engage in a mixture of fund raising and social activities, such as the Summer Fun Day, Santa's grotto at Christmas and the sale, once a week, of croissants to the pupils. The Friends have organised events to raise money towards ICT refurbishment and, more recently, made a significant donation to a local special needs school.
- 3.17 Links with the community have developed since the last inspection and the school promotes a wide range of fund raising events including 'Jumpathon', 'Jeans for Genes' day and other non-uniform events including 'Red Nose Day' and 'Children in Need'. The choir sang at the Royal Albert Hall for the CLIC Sargent appeal. The school also has good links with the local parish church, which it uses for whole-school gatherings and services including the annual carol service, and it makes donations to this church. The school has also forged links with three other schools. One special needs school in South Africa has been supported for the last four years by paying for one pupil's school fees and by donating books and equipment. A local special school has close and developing links as the head and deputy have visited, and money raised by the parents and pupils at the annual Summer Fun Day has been donated, to assist with the school's development. Good arrangements have been made for work experience within the locality for pupils in Year 10.
- 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 quality of governance of the school is good. The present principal has encouraged the strong tradition of family values such as courtesy and friendliness, which are at the heart of the ethos and aims of the school. Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was considered, with the management of the school, not to be clear and effective. The role of the principal is now clearly established and well understood.
- 4.2 The principal works in the school on a day-to-day basis. Areas of responsibility are clearly defined: the headmistress takes responsibility for all educational matters and the principal has overall financial control. He has particular responsibility for buildings, grounds and health and safety and, as a member of the senior management team is involved in long- and medium-term planning arising from consultation with teachers and heads of department.
- 4.3 The principal meets with the headmistress weekly to consider the issues identified by the SMT and to approve plans and financial requests. Clear decisions are given, and financial requests are usually approved quickly if a good case is made. The staff appreciate this support for development plans and progress. This regular formal and frequent informal contact with the headmistress ensures effective oversight of the school. Reports are presented to an annual general meeting of the family company which owns the school and long-term financial strategies are agreed at this level. In this way, well-informed and prudent decisions are made to consolidate the development of the school.
- 4.4 In his daily work, the principal is closely involved in the management of the affairs of the school: he provides challenge, advice and support to the senior management and is genuinely part of the team who are working to develop the school.
- 4.5 The principal is effective in discharging his responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Under his direction there has been a very significant improvement both in the procedures and practice to ensure proper health and safety provision in all areas of the school.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.6 The quality of leadership and management is good, fully supporting the school's stated aim to give pupils a sound education in a happy atmosphere. The clear-sighted and energetic leadership of the headmistress and SMT has led to substantial progress since the last inspection in the development of a highly effective whole-school system for tracking and evaluating pupils' progress. One result of this is that assessment is now used to inform teaching.
- 4.7 The roles of the senior managers are clearly defined and are understood by the staff. The school's needs are clearly identified by the SMT, and the principal is involved in and supports the planning and decision making process. In the Lower School, the appointment of staff with middle management responsibilities has encouraged the identification of best practice and has led to the training of all staff in various initiatives to improve pupils' learning. In the Upper School, heads of department are responsible for planning teaching and learning. The best department handbooks include both detailed planning strategies to help pupils understand how they can improve and critical evaluations of the work of the department, all of which underpin successful teaching and learning. There is as yet no

whole-school approach by middle managers in the Upper School comparable with that in the Lower School to identify strengths and to train staff in new initiatives.

- 4.8 The SMT has made great progress since the last inspection in drawing up and reviewing policies and in setting up procedures, such as those to monitor health and safety issues. These procedures are regularly reviewed and are updated as necessary or appropriate.
- 4.9 At all levels, the school has been effective in securing high quality staff who are supported by suitable induction procedures and by up-to-date policies and practices. It ensures that full checks take place to establish the suitability of all staff, supply staff and proprietors to work with children. The school takes part in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in partnership with the local authority. A full and effective programme ensures that NQTs receive appropriate support, training and opportunities to meet other teachers, and to see work in other schools. Excellent records are kept of the progress of the NQTs.
- 4.10 Appraisal of both teaching and non-teaching staff now takes place regularly. The appraisal scheme for teachers links self-evaluation, lesson observation by the headmistress and a meeting between the teacher and the headmistress; it results in the identification of further training needs for professional development. This working scheme represents good progress since the last inspection in both monitoring teaching and in the identification of training needs for the staff.
- 4.11 Financial management and oversight are the responsibility of the principal who ensures that financial priorities support the development of the school and its educational purposes. Administration is efficient: the bursar and the office staff support the work of the school with a clear understanding of priorities and of how things work in practice. Amongst his other duties, the caretaker takes efficient responsibility for many areas of the fire procedures.
- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.13 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 Putney Park School is characterised by caring relationships and excellent pastoral care which result in a happy and secure environment for the pupils. The traditional ethos of the school is flourishing, and pupils are courteous and purposeful in a harmonious and multi-cultural context. Governance and management are dynamic and provide a clear direction for the school. The school provides good educational opportunities for its pupils, who progress well and achieve results in GCSE examinations which are good for their abilities. Pupils regularly gain admission to the schools of their choice when they leave the school. The school makes the best use of its buildings and grounds and, through the use of local facilities, gives pupils good opportunities for sport.
- 5.2 Many improvements have taken place since the last inspection. Senior management roles are clearly defined and senior managers are initiating and managing change well. Policies to support welfare, and health and safety arrangements have led to improved practice. Significant investment in ICT facilities has taken place, and the use of ICT in lessons is outstanding and improves learning. The tracking system brings together all the assessment information about each pupil, and provides comprehensive information to the SMT, who use it to monitor and improve pupils' achievement. Information from this system is used by teachers to plan appropriate lessons for all pupils. Appraisal for all staff is now in place and leads to the identification of opportunities for professional development for teachers. A middle management structure has been established with clear outcomes in the Lower School and with some improvements in the Upper School. The school is aware that the role of head of department needs further strengthening in order to continue the development of monitoring and spread of excellent practice. The small range of fiction available for loan in the Upper School was noted in the previous report and remains a concern.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school has no major weaknesses. In order to further improve the good quality of education it already provides, it should take the following steps.
1. Strengthen the role and responsibilities of heads of department in the Upper School in order to:
 - develop further the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning;
 - identify and build on areas of excellent practice.
 2. Provide a wider range of fiction for the Upper School, to continue the good reading habits encouraged in the Lower School.
- 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 the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents 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 15th to 16th September 2008 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 Gwen Caddock	Reporting Inspector
Mr Michael Hewett	Former Head, ISA school
Mr Roger Leake	Head, IAPS/ISA school
Mrs Carole McCulloch	Head of Junior School, GSA school
Mrs Catherine Nathan	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Dr Richard Ormrod	Head of Department, IAPS school
Mrs Cathy Williamson	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mrs Sara Wiggins	Early Years Lead Inspector

7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

- 7.1 Putney Park Reception aims to involve pupils and parents in the life of the school and to discover and develop the individual strengths of every pupil. The two Reception classes occupy space within and outside an Edwardian house, open since 1953. Children, of a number of nationalities, are drawn from the immediate community. They join the school at Reception, following registration and a morning visit and a report from any previous school or nursery attended. The children have access to an outdoor classroom and play area, part of which is covered. Specialist rooms used by children include the information and communication technology (ICT) suite and the music rooms. The school is open five days a week during term times. The sessions are from 8.45 am to 3.30 pm. Currently twenty-eight children from four to five years are on roll. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and those who speak English as an additional language are supported within the class. Two suitably qualified staff are regularly employed to work in the Reception class. There are also five staff who regularly teach physical education, swimming, ICT, music and French to the children.
- 7.2 The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and this is reflected in the excellent leadership and care provided for the children by highly enthusiastic staff. Detailed planning, effective policies, and partnerships with parents and outside agencies support each child's progress. Children are happy and the staff are friendly and talk constantly with them, enabling them to make choices and to share.
- 7.3 All children make significant gains in their learning and by the end of Reception, the majority reach the goals expected of them, with many exceeding expectations. They explore and examine, using a range of equipment with growing confidence and expertise. Their imagination is fired by enthusiastic staff who encourage children to become fully involved in the outstanding opportunities for role play, as well as extending their vocabulary and consolidating their learning. They think about appropriate behaviour and explain why it is important to walk close to the wall on outings. The strong focus on teaching phonics, the use of a new reading scheme and the many opportunities for emergent writing all make a significant contribution to children's outstanding progress in early literacy skills. Children's independence is actively encouraged through the weekly routine and they make choices about activities from the moment they enter the classroom. They help to tidy equipment away and are awarded stickers for their contribution.
- 7.4 The personal development of the children is outstanding. Children understand the importance of staying healthy through choices available at lunch as well the exercise provided throughout the school day. Physical skills are exceptionally well developed through physical education and swimming lessons, and the extensive use of the outdoor classroom. They understand the reasons for washing their hands after 'messy' activities, such as creating spaghetti jellies. Children learn to keep themselves safe, can confidently explain the importance of riding 'trikes' the right way around the 'road' and know the numbers allowed to take part in individual play activities. Children's spoken language is frequently excellent, one pupil saying: "Vincent Van Gogh was a famous painter. He liked to paint sunflowers. I am painting a sunflower because it begins with S." They experiment to a high level with technology, using a computer with a gamut of interactive games, where they learn to control the mouse, produce their own animations and create maps. Children are gaining a sense of the wider world, with outings such as a tour of London on a double-decker bus and the visit of a police horse to the outdoor classroom. In their play they visit a supermarket, manage a restaurant and deliver pizzas on 'trikes'. They make outstanding

contributions to their learning. They are considerate and are learning the 'golden rules' of the school. Staff encourage children to take turns, and circle time allows the children to discuss their feelings. Children show empathy.

- 7.5 The organisation of the educational programmes and the learning environment is exceptional. All staff plan learning activities together, and all adults take responsibility for leading learning activities and evaluating them. Formal targets are not yet set from these assessments by the school. Children constantly have access to a wide variety of planned rich and stimulating learning experiences which take place in and out of doors. Staff continually support pupils, moving their knowledge on by helping to develop their skills and enabling them to make progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Ongoing training in various areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum provides staff with new ideas and creates useful links with other settings.
- 7.6 Through consultation with parents, the staff and outside agencies support children with LDD or those with English as an additional language. The evaluation of resources and practice enables the senior management team and staff to focus on specific areas such as the outdoor classroom or critical thinking skills to extend opportunities and resources for children's progression. Information is regularly shared with parents about their children's development and progress toward the Early Learning Goals.
- 7.7 Outstanding provision is made for the welfare of the children. They are cared for in a welcoming and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Staff ensure all areas and equipment used by the children are safe and appropriate risk assessments take place. The premises are secure. Staff understand their role in child protection and are familiar with fire evacuation procedures.
- 7.8 Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. Planning and day-to-day management are excellent. Resources are deployed effectively and efficiently. Staff are competent and caring, and have high expectations for the children. Policies and risk assessments are regularly reviewed.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.9 To improve still further the high quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. ensure that staff and parents are clearer about the next steps children are going to make in their work so that they can assess their successes against these targets.
- 7.10 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.