

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

St Benedict's Junior School

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

Full Name of the School	St Benedict's Junior School
DCSF Number	307/6006
Registered Charity Number	242715
Address	5 Montpelier Avenue, Ealing, London W5 2XP.
Telephone Number	020 8862 2050
Fax Number	020 8862 2058
Email Address	jssecretary@stbenedicts.org.uk
Head	Mr Robert Simmons
Chairman of Governors	The Rt Revd Martin Shipperlee OSB
Age Range	3 to 11
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	9th to 12th November 2009
Early Years Age Range	3 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	12th to 13th October 2009

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

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 St Benedict's Junior School is part of St Benedict's School, Ealing, and educates pupils from the age of three to eleven. Founded as a boys' school in 1902 by monks from Downside Abbey, the school is now a part of the Ealing Abbey Trust and is governed by the Abbot and monks of Ealing, supported by an advisory board of lay people. The school site, in a pleasant West London suburb, is alongside the monastery, which became an independent community in 1947, achieving abbey status in 1955. The senior school, catering for over 680 pupils, occupies part of the same site. The junior school became a separate entity with its own headmaster in 1946 and has been co-educational since September 2007. While girls have been admitted to the sixth form since the 1970s, the senior school became fully co-educational in September 2008. The nursery has been co-educational since it was opened in 2002. The junior school and nursery were inspected at the same time as the senior school and are the subject of a separate report.
- 1.2 In total, 304 pupils attend the school. Sixty-two children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and attend on a full-time basis. Of these children, 37 are boys and 25 are girls. A total of 69 pupils in Years 1 and 2 comprises 48 boys and 21 girls. In Years 3 to 6, there are 173 pupils, of whom 146 are boys and 27 are girls.
- 1.3 The school seeks to provide an education based firmly on the Benedictine tradition which the school encapsulates in its vision of 'teaching a way of living'. The school is committed to promoting Catholic, Christian values and spirituality. All pupils are to be encouraged and supported to achieve well academically as well as being provided with a broad education including sport, music and the arts.
- 1.4 Numerous pupils enter the school at points other than the non-selective nursery. These pupils are assessed in English and mathematics to ensure that they can meet the demands of the curriculum. Results of standardised tests indicate that the ability of pupils overall is above the national average, within a wide range which includes pupils of below average ability as well as a significant proportion of pupils who are well above average.
- 1.5 Two pupils have statements of special educational needs and 35 pupils have been identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, all of whom receive extra support. Twelve pupils come from backgrounds where English is not their first language but do not need extra support with their spoken English.
- 1.6 A significant change in senior staff has taken place since the last inspection. The headmaster was appointed in September 2005. A new management structure has been developed which includes a new head of the EYFS and a combined post of deputy head and director of studies. In order to develop continuity with the adjacent senior school a corporate director of music for both schools has been appointed, and the director of sports in the senior school has oversight of this aspect in the junior school. The school is an accredited 'investor in people'.

- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage

School	Age of children
Nursery	3 to 4
Pre-Prep 1	4 to 5

- 1.8 See Section 7 for the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Junior School

School	NC name
Pre-Prep 2	Year 1
Pre-Prep 3	Year 2
Lower Prep	Year 3
Upper Prep	Year 4
Form One	Year 5
Form Two	Year 6

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 Pupils benefit from an interesting and broad educational experience which is firmly in line with the school's aims to 'teach a way of living', drawn from the Benedictine foundation of the school. The quality of education is good, including the EYFS, and is in line with the school's self-evaluation. The high quality caring environment, with its emphasis on pupils' spiritual, personal and academic development, enhances pupils' educational experience considerably. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained, and the provision for French has improved significantly. Since girls joined the school, careful changes have been made to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs. Provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education (PSHE) is adequate but under-developed. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents responded very positively to the range of experiences provided for their children.
- 2.2 Emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' skills in literacy and in numeracy. Good provision is made in English for reading and speaking and listening. In writing, the provision is sound and this is reflected in the standards pupils attain. In line with the school's aims, considerable attention is paid to pupils' aesthetic and creative development. Due attention is paid to pupils' scientific and physical development. Pupils' technological development is well catered for, with improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) and the due attention paid to design and technology (DT).
- 2.3 The school's ethos plays a large part in pupils' personal development. In conversations with inspectors, they showed that they value the influence of the Benedictine tradition, particularly relationships, and love and forgiveness. Attention is given to PSHE with the adoption of a national programme which deals with social and emotional aspects of learning. The school has identified that further work on the content of PSHE is needed and inspection evidence concurs with this.
- 2.4 Visits to many places of interest in London, and further afield, extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In Year 5, pupils visit Normandy. More locally, pupils visit places of educational interest including London Wetlands, the London Transport Museum and the Imperial War Museum. Visitors to the school, for example during Black History Week, and parents who talk about their work, as well as visiting musicians and acting companies, all add significantly to pupils' educational experience.
- 2.5 A wide range of extra-curricular activities, known as 'Hobbies', is provided and offers a diversity of sporting and non sporting activities. These include Mandarin, fencing, cross stitch as well as reading, mathematics, and ICT clubs. Through the 'Forum' parents are able to contribute to the pupils' educational experience. For example, their suggestions led to the establishment of a ballet hobby after the school became co-educational.
- 2.6 The curriculum is planned effectively using thorough and detailed schemes of work which are implemented consistently. The curriculum is well managed and areas that need improvement have been identified. The very recent restructuring of the school's management has led to a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities in the leadership of these improvements. Care is taken to link subjects together where possible to enhance learning, for example in history and DT.
- 2.7 Ensuring that all pupils are included in the curriculum and school activities is at the heart of the ethos of 'teaching a way of living'. Good support is provided for pupils with language and learning difficulties. Where necessary, pupils are provided with carefully drawn up

individual education plans which are implemented. Pupils with special educational needs are fully supported in line with their statements of educational need, and reported that they found the support they receive to be helpful. More able pupils and those who are gifted and talented are identified, and the curriculum is planned to take care of their needs. Pupils with specific talents are encouraged to reach high standards, for example by playing the Last Post in the school's Remembrance Day service.

- 2.8 Pupils are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education. Detailed attention is given to the preparation of the many pupils who transfer to the senior school, including visits to the adjacent senior school and meetings with their new teachers. Pupils are accustomed to using some of the facilities in the senior school on a daily and weekly basis. Effective preparation is provided for those pupils who do not move to the senior school. For the children in Early Years Foundation Stage, the move to the junior school is seamless.
- 2.9 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.10 Pupils are well educated. They are effectively grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects they study, and competently apply these in their work. They are effective learners and, considering their age and abilities, their achievement is creditable. This achievement accords with the school's aim to enable pupils to succeed academically. Standards in English are good overall and the standards in writing are satisfactory. Inspection evidence agrees with the school's evaluation that pupils achieve well. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained and in a number of subjects standards have improved.
- 2.11 Although pupils take the national curriculum tests in Year 6, the results are not moderated externally but are marked by an external marker. Analysis of data from the school's assessment shows that in line with their abilities, pupils achieve good standards overall. Scrutiny of pupils' completed work and lesson observations confirm the good standards achieved, and the satisfactory standards in writing. Pupils attain good standards in numeracy. By Year 6, they calculate accurately and in Year 2 they correctly order numbers. Pupils develop competent skills in ICT, an improvement. They use these skills effectively, for example to make presentations and to control model fairgrounds they have made.
- 2.12 Pupils make good progress, including those who are more able and those who are gifted or have specific talents. Pupils with language and learning difficulties and those with special educational needs make good progress as they are well supported.
- 2.13 Success is achieved in a broad range of activities. Pupils are accomplished in their instrumental music making and have reached a high level of achievement in the UK Junior Maths Challenge, including the award of gold medals, as well as in art competitions. Considerable prowess in sport is marked by teams that often reach the latter stages of tournaments and competitions.
- 2.14 Pupils' learning skills are well developed and they have positive attitudes to their learning. They work hard in the highly supportive environment in which they learn and are happy and enjoy their work. A strong feature of the school is the ease with which pupils work together either as a class or in smaller groups. They carefully follow instructions.
- 2.15 Pupils think for themselves and competently undertake research. Older pupils investigate the meaning of technical terms in geography associated with rivers. Others find out why certain species of animals are endangered and what could be done to save them. As part of this type of activity they make detailed notes. In Year 4, they made comprehensive notes in order to

produce posters illustrating their findings and successfully made posters which appealed to the readers.

- 2.16 A strength in the school is that pupils are articulate and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They give their opinions confidently, and ask questions for information or clarification. Pupils read fluently. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in learning the sounds letters make (phonics). Pupils' written work shows that they have successfully learnt skills such as the use of expressive language to create images and atmosphere. However, their writing is not always accurate. Pupils do not regularly write at length or consistently use more complex sentences. Following their analysis of pupils' performance in writing, the school has identified the need for improvement and an action plan is in place. With the recent attention paid to handwriting, their work is often well presented.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.17 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and comprehensively meets the school's aim to 'teach a way of living'. The pre-inspection questionnaire completed by parents, revealed widespread satisfaction on their part with the values and attitudes promoted by the school. The strengths reported at the last inspection have been successfully built on.
- 2.18 Pupils show a highly developed spiritual awareness. The ethos based firmly on Catholic, Christian values and spirituality engenders high levels of self-esteem and self-worth within the pupils. As one member of staff explained: "We want the children to be marinated in the Benedictine ethos". Pupils' spirituality is successfully developed through the religious practices of prayer and worship. Pupils pray at the morning registrations, and at other times of the day, with respect and fluency; a French lesson started by pupils praying the Lord's Prayer in French. Classrooms have a prayer focus area to help the pupils with this aspect of their personal growth. Assemblies provide pupils with a sense of occasion and provide helpful opportunities for pupils to reflect on beliefs and values. Pupils' spiritual development benefits considerably from the weekly mass in the nearby Abbey, conducted by the Chaplain with full involvement by pupils. In religious education, pupils explore other values and beliefs and develop an understanding of the way religious faith affects people's lives.
- 2.19 Pupils' moral development is outstanding, due in no small measure to the strong moral ethos provided as part of the school's aims. Besides keeping to the rules pupils are keen to do what is morally right. They know, understand and respect the Code of Conduct and that there are implications for behaviour which contravene these rules. This code is the bedrock of all the school's teaching on morality. Prefects and pupils known as 'Role Models' are encouraged to lead by example, and understand that they are able to influence the younger pupils for the good. Older pupils have a good grasp of moral issues in everyday life, for example the dangers posed by racism and inequality. They cited the work of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela as examples of people fighting against inequality.
- 2.20 Pupils develop a strong social awareness and are provided with numerous opportunities to contribute to the school community. They successfully take responsibility for their own conduct and show respect for people and for property. Classrooms are well cared for and artefacts on display around the school are treated with respect. Pupils are keen to be elected as members of the School Council, who take their responsibilities seriously, lobbying for change and making suggestions for improvements to the environment and the facilities, such as the bags of playground toys and recycling bins. Pupils respond well to the well-established pattern of responsibilities distributed throughout the school, starting with the younger pupils acting as form helpers and culminating in an array of leadership opportunities

in Year 6. The 'Learn to Lead' programme offered to pupils in Years 3 to 6 is a further example of the value the school places on personal development and leadership skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a sound understanding of the main public institutions and services in England.

- 2.21 Pupils benefit from, and enjoy, the many opportunities to improve their cultural understanding. They regularly participate in the performing arts and have extensive opportunities in music. For example, pupils in Year 5 gave an informal lunchtime concert for their parents during the inspection. In art, pupils look at artwork of different cultures. They are effectively helped to appreciate and respect other cultures in ways that promote respect and understanding. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and work and play together harmoniously. The regular opportunities provided to visit places of educational interest enhance pupils' cultural development.
- 2.22 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.23 The teaching is strong and is reflected in the good standards pupils attain. It enables all pupils to make good progress in knowledge, understanding and skills. The quality of the teaching fully supports the school's aim to ensure that pupils are successful in their academic and personal development. Parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate strong parental support for the quality of teaching. The assessment of pupils' progress is secure and effective use is made of the assessment data. The marking of pupils' work has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- 2.24 The high quality relationships between teachers and their pupils enhance the quality of teaching considerably and enable pupils to make the most of their intellectual, physical and creative talents. Teaching takes place in an atmosphere where pupils trust the teachers who want to do the best for their pupils, very much in line with the school's ethos. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are confident that their teachers will always help when they have a difficulty. In conversations with inspectors, pupils commented that teachers readily helped when they had difficulties in lessons. Pupils think for themselves and readily answer questions, even if they are not fully sure that their answer is correct, as they know that the teachers will respect their answers.
- 2.25 Where teaching is particularly successful, it moves at a very brisk pace and teachers' questioning of pupils is highly effective. For example, very brisk pace and excellent use of an interactive whiteboard in a French lesson in Year 6 enabled pupils to make rapid progress as they explained, in French, how they travelled to school. Similarly, the pace in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, in which pupils were undertaking a 'round the world' mental mathematics activity, led to rapid progress. In the small minority of lessons which are less successful, the pace of the lessons is much slower, often caused by too much input from the teacher.
- 2.26 Teachers pose questions effectively to consolidate previous learning and to challenge pupils' understanding. Often a quick question and answer session at the start of a lesson usefully consolidates what took place in the previous lesson. Questions that require more than a quick response are used effectively. In an English lesson in Year 4, questions that encouraged pupils to self-correct their work were especially effective. Highly effective questioning in a science lesson in Year 2 enabled younger pupils to understand how an electric circuit turned on a light bulb.

- 2.27 Across the school, planning for lessons is detailed and thorough, and takes due account of pupils' differing levels of ability and of pupils' special educational needs and language and learning difficulties. Where necessary, careful note is taken of pupils' individual education plans and these pupils receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of teamwork between these adults is considerable and enhances the learning and confidence of these pupils. Appropriate challenge is planned for the more able and gifted pupils. A range of appropriate teaching methods are used effectively.
- 2.28 Teachers have a secure command of the subjects they teach. Particularly effective use is made of teachers' specialist knowledge. Of note is the considerable impact made by specialist teaching in physical education and music across the senior and junior schools, evidence of the close collaboration within St Benedict's School as a whole.
- 2.29 Good quality resources are used well to enhance learning. Most teaching uses the interactive whiteboards well. For example, effective use of the whiteboard in an English lesson in Year 6 enabled pupils to make good progress in understanding how the setting in a story affects the behaviour of the characters.
- 2.30 Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. Sympathetic but firm classroom management encourages pupils to behave well. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents appreciated the quality of behaviour in the school.
- 2.31 Pupils' work is regularly and accurately assessed. In Year 6, pupils are assessed using national curriculum assessment tasks. Although the papers are not formally marked and moderated externally, the school sends them to a suitably qualified external marker. The achievement of younger pupils is assessed externally against the national norm. Teachers have a secure understanding of the standards pupils have to reach to gain a place at senior schools.
- 2.32 The data from assessments is used profitably to track pupils' progress and to evaluate the school's performance. The need to improve standards in writing by enabling more pupils to reach a higher level in the national curriculum tests, by writing more accurately and at length, was highlighted by the comparison the school made of its results against maintained primary schools and preparatory schools. Information from assessment is used effectively to plan work, for example in handwriting.
- 2.33 The quality of marking of pupils' work has improved significantly. Marking is regular and thorough and pupils are provided with written comments giving praise and encouragement. In line with the school's decision to use assessment to promote learning, pupils also receive written advice as to how they might make improvements and a target for them to aim for where appropriate.
- 2.34 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care is outstanding and continues to be a major strength of the school. The care provided meets a key school aim to support children academically, spiritually and in their personal development. Parents are very supportive of the care their children receive.
- 3.2 The school has a palpable atmosphere of trust and warmth where pupils are happy and know that the staff are committed to their welfare, and that there is always someone to turn to for help. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are of high quality. Adults and pupils care for one another. A high value is placed on developing stability in relationships and this is clearly seen in the caring and supportive environment in which the pupils learn. An example of the openness and trust between staff and pupils was seen in a lesson where pupils were confident to suggest positive characteristics of their teacher. Older pupils take care of younger pupils. Pupils indicated in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they enjoyed being at the school and what the school did for them. In their conversations with inspectors, pupils readily explained how much they appreciated the care they were given.
- 3.3 Pastoral care is effectively led and managed. Pastoral arrangements are clear, understood by pupils and staff, and implemented consistently. The restructuring of the management has further strengthened pastoral arrangements. Teachers know their pupils well. Necessary information is carefully recorded and made available to all staff that need to know.
- 3.4 Effective and extensive arrangements are implemented to promote high standards of behaviour. The school is orderly. At times, however, behaviour in the dining hall is boisterous. The Code of Conduct, based on Benedictine teaching, is displayed in all classrooms and implemented. Pupils understand the need for sanctions and are clear about the implications of breaking the code. In line with its Christian ethos, due emphasis is placed on forgiveness. Rewards including house points and 'living our mission' awards are used effectively.
- 3.5 Comprehensive and thorough arrangements are implemented to prevent bullying; for example, the school takes part in the national anti-bullying week. Pupils report that instances of bullying are rare and should they occur they are taken very seriously and dealt with rapidly. Due attention is paid to the prevention of cyber bullying.
- 3.6 Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take exercise in the curriculum and in the after school activities. At lunch there are procedures to encourage healthy eating and to ensure that pupils make healthy choices. The food is healthy and nourishing but the arrangements for checking that pupils have eaten what they have chosen are not consistently applied.
- 3.7 Protection against fire is thorough. All appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. Fire risk assessments are up to date. Diligent attention is paid to child protection. All necessary checks are conscientiously undertaken and a central register of appointments is in place. Risk assessments are in place for health and safety matters and full risk assessments are made and checked for educational visits, including residential visits. Admission and attendance registers are kept accurately. Attendance is good. Effective arrangements are in place and used to check with parents and carers on the whereabouts of pupils who are absent without prior notification. Appropriate facilities and staff are in place to support pupils who are ill or taken ill.

- 3.8 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

- 3.9 The school has an outstanding partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the wider community. This overall quality is in line with the school's self-evaluation.
- 3.10 The parental questionnaire conducted prior to the inspection revealed a high degree of satisfaction with all aspects of the school, especially the attitudes and values promoted by the school, the teaching, the range of subjects, and the help and guidance provided.
- 3.11 Parents have many and varied opportunities to be involved in school activities and in their children's work and progress. They are encouraged to help in the library, support with reading, assist on school educational visits, join the school's Fencing Club and offer their expertise on school committees and in more informal meetings with the children. For example, parents contribute to the school travel working party and the ICT steering group, and speak to pupils about their professional lives. The vibrant and enthusiastic Society of Parents and Friends organises many fund raising events to provide extra resources for the junior school. Strong cooperation with the whole of St Benedict's school is evident and many popular social events are organised. An instant message system has been established to enable parents to be contacted very rapidly, when necessary.
- 3.12 Extensive and detailed information about the school is provided for parents and prospective parents. The school's website provides useful information together with a well produced prospectus. Parents are provided with a detailed Handbook, together with informative news sheets, the half-termly *Keeping in Touch*, as well as the annual magazine, *Priorian*. School policies reflect the importance the school places on the involvement of parents in the education of their children; for example, those on teaching and learning, anti-bullying, behaviour and reporting provide useful advice for parents on how to support their children. A termly joint parental forum with the senior school takes place, when issues raised by parents are discussed with the headmasters. The meeting is preceded by a presentation, usually on an aspect of the curriculum; recently the use of ICT was discussed.
- 3.13 Parents are well provided with regular and relevant information about their children's progress. At the beginning of the academic year they are invited to an information evening when the curriculum and expectations of the year ahead are outlined and three further meetings are provided each year, when the focus is on the pupils' reports. Parents are sent a report about their children's progress each term. These reports are detailed and make clear the nature of children's achievement and what is required for improvement. The school operates an open-door policy and parents are encouraged to have direct contact with teachers through emails or face to face meetings. Parents whose children have special educational needs or language and learning difficulties are encouraged to be involved in discussions about the children's individual education plans.
- 3.14 The small number of parental complaints is handled sensitively, usually on an informal basis. Should it be needed parents have access to a detailed complaints procedure. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents were supportive of the way the school deals with their concerns.
- 3.15 The school has worthwhile links with the local and wider community. The pupils demonstrate concern for others less fortunate than themselves by supporting local and international charities. Each year a whole school charity day takes place at the end of March to support the Abbey's Lenten Appeal.

- 3.16 Concern for the environment is encouraged and the school has an effective school travel plan. Support of the Healthy Planet project has resulted in the purchase of a piece of land in Central America which has been planted with trees.
- 3.17 Across the school, groups of children perform to local communities for the elderly. Strong links are established through the Abbey with members of the local community who are invited to visit the school at open mornings and evenings. Closer links have been developed with local primary schools which have the opportunity to use the school facilities and participate in sporting fixtures. Year 5 pupils from a local primary school were invited to join in *Murder in the Monastery* and a forensic science day. The range of the links with the community makes a significant contribution to pupils' all-round personal development.
- 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 governing body helps to set and secure appropriate aims and values for the school and provide effective oversight and guidance. The quality of governance is good and stronger than was reported at the last inspection. The whole ethos and purpose of the school stem from the life of the monastic community which founded and owns it.
- 4.2 The structure is well defined and meets the needs of a Benedictine school. The members of the Abbot's Council are the trustees and carry the responsibilities of governorship. They work in close collaboration with and largely under the advice of the Board of School Advisors (BSA) which consists of a number of trustees and lay people with wide-ranging experience and expertise. This collaboration, and consequently the role of the advisors, has been strengthened following a review of governance that has resulted in more effective oversight of the school. The BSA will soon be further strengthened by the appointment of someone with specific experience of junior school education.
- 4.3 Both trustees and advisors are well aware of their responsibilities and are actively involved in planning and development. The school has benefited from the substantial investment and good resources provided, as seen in the good condition of the junior school accommodation and the wide range of resources.
- 4.4 Both trustees and advisors have shrewd understanding of the school and are in a position to offer appropriate guidance, support and stimulus and to ensure that it fulfils its mission as a Catholic Benedictine foundation. The advisors have established effective means of informing themselves about the work of the school, including receiving regular reports from subject co-ordinators and delegating one of the current advisors to make himself available to the staff of the junior school at least once a term.
- 4.5 The trustees and advisors are aware of and are diligent in discharging their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including taking proper steps to review and evaluate the effectiveness of their child protection policies and procedures. A serious recent incident involving a member of the monastic community caused the trustees to request an independent review of the measures taken to minimise risk. The advice received from the independent experts has been fully implemented.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.6 Leadership and management of the school are effective, and ensure that the school provides its pupils with an education firmly based on its expressed aims and values. A strong feature of the leadership and management is its thorough understanding and commitment to the ethos of 'teaching a way of living'. The head and deputy work effectively with the leadership team in the senior school to ensure continuity for pupils. Strong leadership is provided for the EYFS. The school has built on the strengths reported previously but the recent restructuring of management roles and responsibilities has led to a lack of clarity which hinders development.
- 4.7 The head has a very good understanding of the school's ethos and aims, and ensures through his effective and sensitive leadership that the school's educational direction is firmly in line with 'teaching a way of living'. The head and deputy form a strong partnership and together provide very effective management. At the heart of this management is a strong commitment to the school's ethos and values. Teamwork is well established. Success is seen in the

- determination of the staff to do their best for the pupils in their care. The school lives its values.
- 4.8 Considerable success is being made in developing St Benedict's School as a whole. Wherever possible opportunities are taken to ensure continuity between the senior and junior schools. Central to this success is the work of Benedict's Ealing Strategy Team (BEST) within which the head and deputy of the junior school play a full part. In the junior school, the senior management team has been recently enlarged and restructured in order for it to delegate leadership more widely. Secure arrangements are in place to enable the senior staff to have a secure overview of the school's strengths and the areas that need improvement. The scrutiny of pupils' work and the monitoring of teaching are undertaken effectively.
- 4.9 The role of the subject co-ordinator has been developed considerably since the last inspection. All subjects, including religious education, now have co-ordinators. They work with the senior management team to monitor the quality of the standards attained and the quality of the provision in their subjects. The recent restructuring of the senior team has led to a lack of clarity in relative roles and responsibilities between the co-ordinators and the responsibilities of the new senior management team, for example in the role of the two senior tutors. The school improvement plan is comprehensive, if a little too long, and takes due account of the educational direction set by the Trustees. It is linked to the outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by senior staff and subject co-ordinators. Specific areas for development are identified and a timescale for the action established. Roles and responsibilities for its implementation are not clear and limit its effectiveness.
- 4.10 Staff development is of good quality and is given a high priority. Training has improved since the last inspection. A clear example of the impact of staff development is the improved arrangements for assessment which are to be used to improve learning. Staff professional review is firmly in place. Induction of staff new to the school is well planned. Although no newly qualified teachers are currently employed, appropriate arrangements are in place to induct such teachers using a nationally agreed scheme. Robust attention is paid to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.
- 4.11 The management of finances by St Benedict's School as a whole, by the trustees, heads and bursar, is prudent and effective. In the junior school, resources are of good quality and quantity. For example, all teaching areas and the hall have interactive whiteboards. The junior school accommodation provides specialist facilities as well as sufficient classrooms, and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' educational experience. The buildings are in a good state of repair and decoration, as well as being clean and well cared for. The accommodation is enhanced by the carefully mounted displays of pupils' completed work, especially their art work. The grounds are well tended.
- 4.12 The administration is very efficient and works closely with that in the senior school.
- 4.13 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.14 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 successfully meets its aims to provide an education based on the school's vision based firmly on Benedictine principles, where pupils are encouraged to achieve well academically whilst enjoying a broad curriculum. Children in the EYFS and pupils in the remainder of the school receive a good all-round education, well suited to their interests, aptitudes and needs. Pupils are happy. They achieve good standards overall, reflecting the strong teaching. They are provided with an interesting curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they are effective learners. Pastoral care is excellent and provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is secure. Well-tailored support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and those with learning difficulties. Links with parents are outstanding and those with the community are worthwhile. These successes are largely due to effective leadership and enthusiastic management, together with the determination of all the staff to do the best for their pupils. The school has rightly identified writing as an area for development. Standards of writing are satisfactory, whereas they are good in the other aspects of English. The very new management structure is not clear enough in defining the relationship of the roles and responsibilities of the existing arrangements with those newly created. The provision of PSHE is under developed.
- 5.2 Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards have improved. The role of the subject co-ordinator has been developed and a co-ordinator is in place for religious education. Marking has improved significantly and is consistent with the school's move to use assessment to improve pupils' learning. French is now secure in the curriculum, effectively co-ordinated, and all pupils have access to it.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 In order to make further progress the school should:
1. improve standards in pupils' writing;
 2. clarify the roles and responsibilities of those with management responsibilities, especially in relation to leading improvements;
 3. improve the provision of PSHE by providing training for staff in all aspects of the formal taught provision.
- 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 9th to 12th November 2009. 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 12th and 13th October 2009 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 Rod Sharman	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Maria Edwards	Headteacher, GSA junior school
Mr Andy Falconer	Headteacher, IAPS school
Ms Annie Lee	Head of Department, GSA junior school
Mrs Jane Scott	Headteacher, IAPS school
Mrs Dawn Nasser	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Anne Farnish	Early Years Team Inspector

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

- 7.1 The EYFS at St Benedict's Junior School comprises one nursery and two reception classes, providing education and care for sixty-two children aged 3 to 5 years. The reception classes are located within the main junior school building, whilst the nursery provision is in a large house, a short walk away. Five children have been identified as having an early learning difficulty and are receiving additional support.
- 7.2 With outstanding elements, the school is extremely effective in meeting the overall needs of the children in the EYFS. Each child is valued as an individual who is encouraged to be an independent, critical thinker; the children are allowed the freedom of choice within a well-planned environment. However, identification of each individual child's progress would provide support for the formal evaluative process. The children's welfare is of the utmost importance to the early years team, whose members work well together and ensure continuity between the classes, which makes for a careful transition. Several good strategies promote communication and partnership with parents and encourage parental support, although formal meetings between staff and parents are less frequent.
- 7.3 Members of the EYFS team are dedicated in working together to provide the best outcomes for all the children. This is promoted through the high quality of leadership and management. Policies and procedures effectively promote the safeguarding of the children. Staff are suitably checked, qualified and experienced. The school development plan actively supports the continued development of the early years department on a long-term basis. This is supported by improvements since the last inspection; a primary focus on the outside area now enhances the free flow of links between the inside and outside learning environments.
- 7.4 The high quality of the provision in the EYFS is achieved through the positive relationships which effectively promote the personal, social and emotional development of the children and acknowledge their individual needs. Clear daily plans are in place and provide a framework within which the children learn and achieve. Well-considered observation and planning ensures that every child is suitably challenged but processes for evaluating the teaching, learning and sharing of good practice, of the team as a whole, are less effective. Excellent role-modelling by the adults in the setting and consistency in routines throughout the school enable aspects such as understanding about self-care, taking turns and managing behaviour to be readily achieved. Staff are committed to ensuring the best outcomes for the children.
- 7.5 The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave in a safe and responsible manner at all times. Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are excellent. They are assessed on entry using standardised tests and all children make very good progress in building on the results of these throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. They play and work well independently, in pairs and with others in small groups. Through the excellent balance of adult- and child-led activities the children benefit from a wide-ranging curriculum. Excellent adult interactions encourage the children to explore and discover. Specific and precise questioning from the adults allows the children to be highly motivated, active learners who are articulate and confident to question. This was especially evident with their eagerness, independence and confidence to use the whiteboard and to extend other activities introduced to them by the teacher. Children achieve well but observations do not always link individual children's progress clearly with future planning.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.6 To improve further the high quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. review and evaluate the observation and assessment process for each child to ensure that 'next steps' are highlighted and incorporated in ongoing planning;
 2. engage in more frequent dialogue with the parents or carers to ensure a two-way partnership with all who are involved in the children's growth and development;
 3. enable continuous professional development for the whole early years team to enhance their understanding of a principled approach to the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- 7.7 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.