



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**CHANDLINGS**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Chandlings

Full Name of School	<b>Chandlings</b>
DfE Number	<b>931/6117</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>309639</b>
Address	<b>Chandlings Bagley Wood Kennington Oxford Oxfordshire OX1 5ND</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01865 730 771</b>
Fax Number	<b>01865 735 194</b>
Email Address	<b>saj@chandlings.org.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Sophia Ashworth Jones</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Lord Wakeham</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>399</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (229 boys; 170 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 20      5-11: 307</b>
	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 72</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total: 399</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Maria McAloon</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>16 Nov 2010 to 17 Nov 2010</b>

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in November 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

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

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

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

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Chandlings was founded as a co-educational day-school in 1994 by the governors of Cothill House to complement the preparatory boys' boarding education offered at Cothill. Chandlings is now integral to the Cothill Trust whose governing board administer the school. Much of this work is carried out by the principal, who works closely with the school's head. The relatively close proximity of Chandlings, in rural surroundings near Oxford, and Cothill enables the two schools to share bursarial and grounds staff. The school buildings are at the centre of a large estate with playing fields, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, stables and riding arena. The original large house has been expanded over time to create more classrooms and specialist areas which include multi-purpose halls, art, design and technology (DT) and science facilities. A dedicated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) section for the youngest children has also been built with an adjacent outdoor area.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide quality education with high academic expectations delivered in an exciting and stimulating way by means of a well-balanced curriculum. Through this, it intends that pupils receive a strong educational foundation, gain a lifelong love of learning and a sense of achievement, and imbibe the philosophy that 'if you are going to do something, do it well'. These overall aims are adapted in the EYFS with the especial aim of encouraging children's motivation in their learning. Since the previous inspection, a new head has been appointed and the senior leadership team restructured. The EYFS department has been enlarged to accommodate two-year-olds. Several significant buildings have been added including further classrooms and a music suite.
- 1.3 Ninety-two EYFS pupils are enrolled, 32 of whom attend part-time. Three hundred and seven full-time pupils are in Years 1 to 6, 182 boys and 125 girls. Throughout the school, including the EYFS, 26 pupils have been identified by the school with a degree of learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD). Thirty-three pupils employ English as an additional language (EAL) and they receive support as necessary. In all, some 47 pupils receive some form of specialist support from the school. No pupils have statements of special educational needs. Most pupils come from a variety of local business and professional families and represent the limited ethnic diversity of the area. A variety of standardised methods indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 Pupils' academic achievements are excellent. Many examples of strong individual achievement are in evidence as shown by the high annual frequency of pupils' awards in scholarship examinations. Pupils achieve success in areas including art, music, sporting and academic excellence. These young people, both at the age of thirteen or at the age of eleven gain entry to a wide variety of boarding and day schools, both locally and more distant. Their corporate record strongly exemplifies the school's primary aim and is supported by pupils' considerable successes in a broad spread of individual and team activities including music, drama and many sports. Pupils demonstrate excellent skills in independent and collaborative study and are outstandingly articulate. Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged in lessons seen, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, indicates that the pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 2.2 The curriculum, from Year 1, is broad, well-balanced and particularly carefully planned, having undergone substantial revision since the previous inspection. Physical education and games receive a high profile alongside academic and other lessons and are particularly popular. The curriculum supports pupils' development and progress well and thereby enables pupils of all abilities to acquire excellent attitudes and very considerable interest in their education. It gives especially strong support to pupils with LDD but does not yet always ensure consistently strong challenge for the most able. However, it links well with the wide diversity of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities that is available. Examples of this wide-ranging provision include 'Culture Vultures' where a variety of cultural matters are addressed, Thames tapestry and digital editing; the 'Survive and Thrive' activity gives pupils the exciting opportunity of learning camouflage techniques and experiencing night hiking.
- 2.3 Teaching seen was good overall with a good number of outstanding examples of classroom practice, including in parts of the EYFS. Lessons were always strongly planned. The methods of teaching used, across subjects and year groups, were less consistently effective. As a result pupils did not always receive strong challenge and, within a few areas, pupils' progress, especially amongst the more academically able, was more limited. Pupils are well supported in lessons, with individual needs being clearly recognised and normally addressed in stimulating ways. This meets the school's aims well as pupils developed good skills to enable independent learning. Pupils with specific difficulties were particularly well identified; each has a comprehensive individual teaching plan (ITP). Many staff members used the ITPs strongly to address the appropriate needs. Each pupil's progress and development is tracked with great care; wide-ranging records are kept and used effectively to support individuals in their maturation. The best examples of marking and assessment provide clear indications of pupils' achievement and progress, giving encouraging, evaluative comments, setting targets and giving suggestions for improvement. These high standards are not consistently seen across departments and subjects.

## **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.4 Pupils' personal development matures steadily as they move through the school and, by the time they leave, their personal characteristics and qualities, including their confidence and literacy, are excellent. Spiritual development amongst pupils is good. Pupils are well aware of the wonders of nature, their appreciation being enhanced by the school's beautiful estate. They have a sound understanding of Christianity, together with a good comprehension of other religions. Opportunities exist for prayer and reflection and these help to set an appropriate spiritual tone for the school community from which pupils benefit well. Moral development is excellent and all pupils, including those in the EYFS, are well aware of right and wrong. Pupils understand and respect the school's code of conduct and the occasional need for the application of sanctions, judging them to be fair.
- 2.5 Pupils have a particularly good understanding of social issues, this being especially reinforced by the school's eco-awareness and strong charitable giving. In particular the supportive relationship with Nakuru, an orphanage charity, gives a great insight into poor conditions in Africa, whilst incidents such as the Haitian earthquake or national fund-raising generate substantial giving. Such events and the associated activities, for example sponsored runs, ensure pupils understand well, and empathise with, a wide variety of social need. Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They have a wide breadth of cultural understanding because of their individual backgrounds and personal experience as well as the school's wide ranging curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. The school's adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* is an especially, but not unusually, strong example of knowledge of their own culture. As a result pupils are outstandingly aware of cultural matters, benefiting accordingly.
- 2.6 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. Comprehensive policies give staff clear guidance and ensure that their practices are safe. The house system provides excellent support and encouragement for all pupils from Year 1 to enjoy being part of the school and pupils' enthusiastic response reflects this involvement and ownership. As a result pupils are exceptionally well cared for and risks suitably minimised so that their personal development is strongly enhanced. Robust risk assessments are assiduously completed. Should a potential weakness be identified, the school's rapid response corrects the matter and adapts both policy and practice.

## **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.7 Governance is outstanding. The trustees hold a fine balance of appropriate skills and this experience gives exceptional and supportive strength to the senior management team. The principal has specific governance responsibility for safeguarding, a role which is taken most seriously; policies and procedures receive regular, thorough review. Leadership and management are good and show a number of particularly strong features, including the setting of a clear educational direction. Since the previous inspection, much work has been done to develop the effectiveness of the curriculum. This, coupled with leaders' first-class knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and talents enables them to give pupils excellent guidance and support; for example, in the selection of a suitable range of schools to match pupils' abilities, as their consistently successful entry to senior schools testifies. The leadership has ensured that comprehensive planning has taken place creating policy and procedure documents of high quality as well as excellent long- and medium-term plans in all subject areas. It has further ensured that the high

quality of subject planning is carried through to the planning of individual lessons. Monitoring of the delivery of these plans, lesson by lesson, is not yet embedded fully in practice. The appraisal process does not include all adult staff and has also yet to be fully effective.

- 2.8 All adults associated with the school, including volunteers, are appropriately checked. New staff members are recruited securely and receive a thorough induction into the school's procedures. This enables them immediately to commence their academic and pastoral support for the pupils. All teaching and non-teaching staff received child protection training and this is consistently and properly updated. Recruitment checks are all properly recorded on a central register. Premises and accommodation are excellent, being particularly thoughtfully designed, and built or adapted. The close proximity of the games fields and all other facilities in an environment of unusual attractiveness and space help ensure that they are well-used. As a result they strongly enhance pupils' educational experience.
- 2.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Parents are well informed of pupils' progress and development. Full reports with staff comments and targets for future development are provided termly. Regular formal meetings with staff are arranged and opportunities for informal discussions with teachers are available daily. These, backed up by the ready availability of senior managers, enable parents to understand clearly the progress their children make. The school goes to great lengths to keep families abreast of activities and events. Much information, including many policies, is available on the school's website and all are available from the school office. Parents, carers and guardians are fully aware of the school's arrangements and give appropriate support to their children. An inspection questionnaire elicited a limited response from parents but analysis indicates strong support for the school particularly in the care exercised for their children pastorally and in lessons. The school's complaints procedure is well-publicised although parents, carers and guardians rarely find its use necessary. As a result the complaints record contains few entries and, in the last academic year, no formal complaints were made.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

#### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Expand the appraisal system to include all members of staff.
  2. Ensure that all pupils, including the most able, are consistently well challenged in lessons.
  3. Monitor the application of marking so that practice consistently reflects the examples of excellence seen.
  4. Increase the opportunities for the EYFS Reception children to learn independently.
  5. Make greater daily use of the outdoor provision for EYFS Reception children.

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

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

4.1 The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with some outstanding features. The high ratio of adults to children within the setting means that staff know the children extremely well and are able to meet their individual needs successfully. As a result, the children make good progress from their individual starting points. Senior staff have a good understanding of the setting's strengths and a strong drive for constant development, improvement and expansion. Consequently, the setting has a good capacity for continuous improvement.

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

4.2 Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. Safeguarding procedures are robust, and policies are well implemented in practice, so that all children have equal opportunities to succeed. Systems for assessing pupils' progress are good, and are used well to inform the next steps in teachers' planning. Parents are extremely happy with the setting and what it offers their children. Staff and resources are well deployed and teamwork is strong, particularly in the Nursery. Self-evaluation is accurate, identifying appropriate priorities for development.

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

4.3 The quality of the provision is good with some outstanding features. The indoor learning environments are lively, and organised with high quality resources. Relationships between staff and children are excellent. Staff use their assessments carefully to plan to meet children's needs. This is particularly successful in the Nursery, where the balance of indoor and outdoor provision and of child-initiated and adult-led learning is well matched to the children's stages of development. In Reception, the balance of indoor and outdoor learning is less strong. Whilst a good range of adult-led activities are planned across all areas of learning, opportunities in this year group for child-initiated activities are more limited. Staff are vigilant in their care of the children, helping them to develop safe and healthy habits. There are high expectations for behaviour, and the children are encouraged to think of others. Daily procedures for care are robust.

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

4.4 Outcomes for the children are good with some outstanding features. The children are happy and settled, and keen to get involved in their activities. They make good progress during their time in the EYFS. From broadly average starting points, they enter Year 1 with skills which are generally above average for their age. Children feel safe and secure in the setting, and readily turn to adults if they need help. With encouragement, they eat well and look after themselves as far as possible. Children in the Reception classes work well together and support one another. Those in the Nursery are learning to work with others and to share resources without fuss. Children are developing valuable skills for the future, particularly their literacy,

numeracy and social skills. They are, for example, especially articulate for their ages and demonstrate strong investigative skills. They leave Reception confident about facing the new challenges of Year 1.

**Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the principal, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Robin Lewis

Mrs Daphne Cawthorne

Mrs Jane Chesterfield

Miss Patricia Griffin

Reporting Inspector

Headmistress, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector

Early Years Team Inspector (Head of Pre-prep  
and Deputy Head, IAPS school)