

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

THE FROEBELIAN SCHOOL

by the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

11th – 14th June 2007

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

The Froebelian School

Full Name of the School	The Froebelian School
DfES Number	383/6057
Registered Charity Number	529111
Address	Clarence Road, Horsforth, Leeds, LS18 4LB.
Telephone Number	0113 258 3047
Fax Number	0113 258 0173
Email Address	office@froebelian.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr John Tranmer
Chairman of School Council	Mr Edward Brown
Age Range	3 to 11 years
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	11th – 14th June 2007

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 has 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.

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 The Froebelian School is a non-selective, co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 to 11. It was founded in 1913 by Miss Hoe who was influenced by the philosophy and methods of the German educationalist Freidrich Froebel – hence the name of the school. Froebel pioneered early years’ learning, and the school follows this tradition by educating children from the ages of three to five in Kindergarten classes. In 1969, it became a charitable educational trust, administered by a board of governors known as the School Council. Whilst the school is a Christian, non-denominational community, families from all backgrounds are welcomed and subscribe to its ethos, values and aims.
- 1.2 Since the First World War, the school has been situated in Clarence Road, Horsforth, which is close to the Leeds ring-road on the north side of the city. Over the years, the premises have changed and expanded, and, since the last inspection, an extension has been built to provide for new classrooms, a dedicated room for those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and specialist music and art rooms. Although the site is very urban, it includes outdoor space of tarmac, safety surfaces and wooded areas; in addition, other local facilities are used for several sporting activities.
- 1.3 The number of pupils on roll is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. The school currently has 179 pupils, of whom 50 are in the Foundation Stage, including 26 part-time pupils, 48 are in Years 1 and 2, and 81 are in Years 3 to 6. Almost equal numbers of boys and girls attend the school. The results of the Foundation Stage profiles and of standardised tests across the school indicate that pupils’ average ability is above the national average, although results vary considerably between different year groups. If pupils perform in line with their abilities, their results will be above the national average of all maintained primary schools.
- 1.4 Pupils come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, with most from professional or business families, including a significant number of parents in the medical field. A large number of pupils live within five miles of the school, although a few travel long distances. Approximately one out of seven pupils come from ethnic minorities, and six pupils come from families where English is an additional language, although none is at an early stage of learning English. Five pupils are identified as needing learning support, and no pupil has a statement of educational needs.
- 1.5 Having completed their primary education, the majority of pupils leave at the end of Year 6 to transfer to local independent schools, most of which are selective. A few pupils will join boarding schools, and a very small number continue their education in maintained secondary schools.

- 1.6 The school has many traditions and values, as expressed in its original motto, 'serve and endeavour', but it also has a commitment to progress and innovation, as seen in its modern, supplementary motto, 'giving a flying start to the citizens of tomorrow'. It aims:
- to provide education and care of the highest possible standard, thus supporting the development of pupils' moral and social values and spiritual awareness within a happy, caring, disciplined and purposeful environment;
 - to value every member of the school as a unique, special individual, encouraging kindness, tolerance, respect and integrity within its multi-cultural, multi-faith community;
 - to encourage pupils to learn from the wisdom of teachers, providing extensive opportunities for creative and artistic expression;
 - to offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities and sports, that promote physical development, foster a team spirit and encourage fair play;
 - to work in partnership with parents and carers, providing information, services and advice;
 - to prepare pupils for transfer to a wide range of secondary schools.
- 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 table.

School	NC name
Lower Kindergarten	Nursery
Kindergarten	Reception
Transition	Year 1
Remove	Year 2
Form I	Year 3
Form II	Year 4
Form III	Year 5
Form IV	Year 6

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The school provides a positive educational experience which reflects the aims of the school. Pupils achieve good academic standards and they are thoroughly prepared for their journey through school and on to the next stage of their education. Pupils learn in a happy, caring and purposeful environment and the school provides effective opportunities for creative and artistic expression, either within or beyond the regular curriculum. The school promotes physical development through activities and sports which encourage team spirit and fair play. Since the last inspection, the quality of the educational experience has been maintained, and the provision of extra-curricular activities has been further improved, so that it is now outstanding.
- 2.2 In the Foundation Stage, children experience a broad range of activities based on the six areas of learning, moving across the Stepping Stones towards the Early Learning Goals. A good staff-to-pupil ratio enables them to make a positive start and most exceed the Early Learning Goals at the end of their Reception year. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is based on the National Curriculum with the addition of personal, social and health education (PSHE), drama, religious education (RE), and French from Year 3. From their earliest years, pupils are taught by specialist subject teachers in physical education (PE) and music. From Year 3, specialist subject teaching is gradually increased and, by Year 6, most subjects are taught by specialists to prepare pupils for the move to senior schools.
- 2.3 The amount of time given to creative subjects within the timetable, such as art and design and technology (DT), is approximately half the time recommended in the DfES guidelines. This relatively low amount of creative activity within the curriculum results in the daily timetable for some classes giving an imbalance of educational experiences, a point not previously fully appreciated by the school. One example of several is the Tuesday timetable for a younger class, which consists of three periods of numeracy, two periods of literacy, two periods of science, followed by two periods of geography. The lack of any creative or physical activity makes this a very academically demanding day. However, pupils do benefit from extended sessions of drama at certain times of the year and can enjoy creative clubs at lunchtimes and after school.
- 2.4 A very wide range of extra curricular activities is offered and many of the staff willingly give of their time to run clubs which enrich the educational experience for the pupils. Clubs include chess, Spanish, martial arts, craft and art clubs and 'Little Master Chefs' as well as music and sport. The activities programme is efficiently and enthusiastically organised. Over four-fifths of pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to play a musical instrument, as well as all pupils in these years learning the recorder in their music lessons. The curriculum is extended well by a wide variety of educational visits experienced across the age range; for example, pupils from Years 5 and 6 have recently visited France and a group of pupils take part in the 'Three Peaks Challenge' in June. A large number of sporting fixtures are arranged and sporting successes and achievements are celebrated at the annual sports awards evening.
- 2.5 Pupils are thoroughly prepared for each stage of their education. Induction procedures into nursery involve visits to school, informal assessments and a new parents' evening in May, when the headmaster talks to parents, they have chance to visit the classroom, meet the staff and each other. Older children joining the school have a visit where they are assessed before entry. All pupils take part in a 'moving up' day to prepare for the next class. The headmaster has good links with senior schools and he offers help and advice to parents on

their choices. A parents' evening is held to give information to parents of Year 6 pupils about transfer to the next stage of their school careers. Continuous assessment, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics, prepares pupils very well for moving on to their senior schools.

- 2.6 The curriculum is effectively planned – including a comprehensive programme for PSHE - and policy documents are well organised and reviewed regularly. All pupils across the school experience the full curriculum offered and enjoy a wide range of educational activities appropriate to their age and abilities.
- 2.7 Provision for those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is outstanding. Effective provision is made in the classroom by the teacher and teaching assistants, and those requiring individual support receive excellent additional help from the learning support co-ordinator. Where needed, individual education plans (IEPs) are provided and parents are involved in this process as well as in target-setting and reviews. Pupils with English as an additional language are catered for well within the classroom. A co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils has been appointed, a register compiled, and arrangements for these pupils are evolving.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 The quality of pupils' learning and achievement is good in relation to their abilities, and is in line with the aims of the school of providing education of the highest possible standard within a happy, caring, disciplined and purposeful environment. This quality maintains the standards reported at the last inspection. Pupils have built solid foundations for developing further their knowledge, skills and understanding in subjects and activities.
- 2.10 Literacy skills are used highly effectively so that pupils speak, listen, write and read with confidence and enjoyment. Numeracy skills are also strong and pupils make good progress. Their knowledge and understanding across all subjects is developed effectively through well-planned lessons and good quality teaching. Creativity is fostered appropriately through different experiences, such as in a Year 4 writing lesson when pupils were given at random a setting, character and event in order to create their own stories. One child exclaimed in excitement: "I've got so many ideas, I'll never use them all!" Pupils apply their knowledge and understanding successfully in a variety of situations across the curriculum. They undertake their own investigative work and research across many subject areas, including mathematics, science, history and RE, showing that they can think and act critically.
- 2.11 No significant difference was seen in the relative attainment between pupils of different gender, in different subjects, or between pupils of differing abilities. All pupils were very well motivated and equally willing to work hard on the tasks set.
- 2.12 Results in national tests at age seven over the three years up to 2006 were far above the national average for all maintained primary schools overall. Results in national tests at age eleven over the same period of time were similarly far above the national average for all maintained primary schools overall. These results at both ages represent high achievement. Overall achievement seen in lessons during the inspection, whilst good, was not quite as high. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 in particular have fewer creative and academic challenges beyond the immediate expectations of the core curriculum. Nevertheless, they are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education.

- 2.13 The school has an impressive list of individual and team achievements, all of which contribute to the development of pupils' confidence, understanding of team responsibilities and support and respect for each other. Over the last three years, pupils have been awarded twenty-six scholarships, including two for music, by senior independent schools. Almost all pupils gain places at their first choice schools when moving on to secondary education. Pupils have achieved good results in the music examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, many with merit or distinction. In music and drama, many individual pupils and groups have been successful in local competitive festivals; for example, the choir has won the primary schools' choirs' section for the last three years. Over the same period, eleven gold, twenty-four silver and thirty-seven bronze awards have been won in the national primary mathematics challenge. The school chess team came second in the Leeds schools' chess league in 2006. In sport, too, the school is the frequent winner of the local junior schools' sports association netball league and swimming gala, and last year was the winner of the local six-a-side football tournament.
- 2.14 Pupils have highly developed skills and very positive attitudes for work and study, and generally enjoy their work. They are very articulate, listen well, and both read and write intelligently and fluently. They are confident when expressing themselves and use subject-specific vocabulary extremely well in many subjects. They listen carefully to each other's comments and to the instructions of their teachers. Strong reading skills were evident in a Year 5 English lesson, where pupils were reading out their own examples of idiom. Pupils' writing skills are similarly strong, because they are given plenty of opportunity to write extensively in subjects other than English. Numeracy skills are well taught and pupils can apply mathematical concepts effectively in different situations, as seen, for example, in a Year 5 geography project on the weather which included rainfall charts, or when preparing measurements for a clock design in DT in Year 6. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good. Effective use of ICT was observed in poems by pupils in Years 2 and 3, and in a range of data handling undertaken across the school, which was on display.
- 2.15 Pupils reason and argue cogently, as in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where they had to use their reasoning skills by choosing which three presents with price tags attached would come to a total nearest to five pounds. Pupils work independently successfully and organise themselves very well when they are given the opportunity. On occasion, pupils' independent thinking is restricted when the style of teaching is too prescriptive, or when teachers do not allow pupils enough time to think through and express the answers for themselves. Pupils in the older classes develop effective study skills in such areas as note-taking.
- 2.16 A variety of learning experiences fosters a good approach to paired and group work and pupils always work well together, for example when making mini-Torahs in a Year 3 RE lesson. Pupils arrive promptly to lessons and settle quickly and quietly. They concentrate very well and persevere with their work. Pupils' attitudes are outstanding, their behaviour is exemplary, they generally show enthusiasm for their work and activities and they enjoy their learning.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.17 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding and is a strength of the school. It makes a significant contribution to the fulfilment of the school's aim to value every member as a unique, special individual, encouraging kindness, tolerance, respect and integrity within its multi-cultural, multi-faith community. The quality of pupils' personal development has been maintained since the last inspection.
- 2.18 Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness. They have high self-worth, self-confidence and self-esteem, founded in the school culture of encouragement and praise. Pupils explore their feelings and curiosity through the creative arts, whether in the study of major artists, the making of music together or taking part in a Shakespeare workshop. Assemblies, which take place on four days of the week and are generally Christian in character, offer some opportunities for quiet reflection on personal beliefs and for shared celebration, and these are sometimes taken by visitors from other world faiths. Pupils develop an awareness of the spiritual dimension of life and the part faith plays in people's lives around the world through their RE lessons. They say that they are given good opportunities in circle time for discussion and reflection on current topics of concern.
- 2.19 The very strong development of pupils' moral awareness takes place within a caring family community where staff-to-pupil and pupil-to-pupil relationships are excellent and based on mutual respect. Pupils distinguish clearly between right and wrong from an early age. Rules are few but morality is clear and reflects the school code that "everybody has the right to be happy; nobody has the right to make others unhappy". Merits reward good behaviour and pupils are eager to earn these for their houses. Opportunities are given across the curriculum for the exploration of moral concepts; for example, in a Year 6 English topic, the arguments for both sides of the whaling debate were researched and presented in factual written accounts. Pupils feel safe in their learning environment and are happy to risk their views and confidently argue their points to others. Elements of the PSHE programme such as human rights and 'How do rules and laws affect me?' further support this and make pupils aware of their future roles as citizens.
- 2.20 Pupils' social awareness is outstanding. They are kind and considerate to each other, unfailingly courteous and polite to visitors and recognise and respect social differences. The value the school places on its community life underpins this. Many opportunities are given for corporate activity including sports teams, residential trips, school productions and the 'Three Peaks Challenge' which considerably aid the development of personal worth and leadership skills. Working co-operatively, whether in the classroom to produce a limerick as in Year 2 or sharing toys in the playground, is a strong feature of school life. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 develop responsibility for others as lunch monitors, playground pals and school officers. In PSHE, they discuss aspects of citizenship such as democracy, and this is seen in action in the pupil council where pupils are confident that their views will be valued. Notable achievements are celebrated in assembly and in *The Froebelian Digest*; pupils are proud of their successes and those of others. Thinking of others begins early; when confronted with piles of coins to spend in the Reception class shop, one child was heard to say: "that's a lot of money; more than we need; we'll give it to charity". In reality, working for local and national charities is an important part of the development of social awareness in school.
- 2.21 Pupils' cultural awareness is very well developed and they acquire an appreciation of, and a respect for, their own and others' cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different traditions. Elements of cultural diversity are interwoven through the curriculum, in poetry, art, drama, geography, history, music and other subjects. The RE

programme of study includes reflection on major world faiths and pupils acknowledge and celebrate various festivals throughout the year. Pupils' understanding of each other's cultures and those from around the world have been enriched through the experiences of a visit to France for Years 5 and 6, visitors to lessons and assemblies and the school's first multi-cultural week, where each class focused on aspects of a different area of the world. 'Pen-pal' links with schools in Germany and the United States of America offer further opportunities for cultural understanding, through exchanging information about their schools and families.

- 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 quality of teaching is good, in line with the school's aim of providing education of the highest possible standard by encouraging pupils to learn from the wisdom of teachers. This quality mirrors the standard reported at the time of the last inspection. In a substantial number of lessons seen, teaching was good or better, and in several lessons it was outstanding.
- 2.24 Teaching enables pupils of all ages and abilities, including those needing extra support and those for whom English is an additional language, to acquire new knowledge, make good progress in their understanding and develop effective skills. Teachers are most conscientious and diligent; they have an excellent knowledge of their subjects and generally conduct their lessons in an atmosphere that engenders work, perseverance, interest, enjoyment and excellent behaviour. They have a strong desire for all their pupils to make effective progress.
- 2.25 Most lessons are carefully planned reflecting a good understanding of the aptitude, needs and prior attainment of pupils. This planning ensures all pupils become involved in a range of activities. In a Year 1 history lesson, pupils were focused well on listening to their teacher, thus developing their understanding of what life was like for men in the services in World War II. They had previously brought into school artefacts from their own family history, and they thoroughly enjoyed moving around the classroom and accessing their own resources, before settling quickly to their writing task. Individually prepared lessons, graded worksheets, group work and excellent deployment of teaching assistants provide sensitive help for pupils needing support with their learning; the support given by teaching assistants across the school is a major strength. The use of a range of strategies provides variety to lessons, adding interest and enjoyment. These strategies include practical sessions in science, opportunities for investigative work in mathematics and extensive use of working in groups, which encourage pupils to think and learn for themselves. In a few lessons, however, the teaching style was too directed and did not allow this to happen.
- 2.26 The most successful lessons were characterised by a clear objective, a sense of purpose, enthusiastic teaching, good management of time and a good awareness of pupils so that in many instances pupils were given work which was very well matched to their needs. In a few lessons, the pace was slower and the more able pupils were insufficiently challenged. In all lessons, it was clear that a very strong relationship existed between pupils and teachers. The pupils obviously had great confidence in their teachers and teaching assistants, appreciating their support and guidance. This mutual respect serves to develop pupils' self-confidence, and teaching encourages pupils to behave in an extremely responsible manner.

- 2.27 The school has plentiful resources and teachers make full use of them, as in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, where pupils benefited from an outstanding explanation of how to construct a pictograph through the use of an interactive whiteboard. Lessons observed witnessed maximum use of these latter resources, extremely good teaching space, the infant activity room, a range of science equipment and a wide variety of texts. All served to improve the quality of teaching.
- 2.28 The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is excellent across the school. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is very effective, with regular notes made of each child's progress across the Stepping Stones towards the nationally expected Early Learning Goals. In Years 1 to 6, all staff keep records of pupils' attainment in lessons and in their written work, and lesson evaluations are used to adapt the curriculum to support pupils' learning. Much of the marking is very constructive and gives pointers to the pupils on ways in which they could improve their work. Pupils say that they find most marking helpful and encouraging. Termly targets are set by pupils, in conjunction with their parents, in different areas of school life, such as work, homework, personal development and organisation. They enjoy the success of receiving a certificate, called the 'Five Star Award', for achieving five of these targets.
- 2.29 Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly using a wide variety of standardised tests, including baseline assessments, Foundation Stage profiles, and tests which enable pupils' work to be levelled according to national attainment targets. These results are recorded centrally and are analysed carefully by the school to check overall attainment. This informs the headmaster and staff of any general issues which need to be given attention and of any priorities for future learning. It also enables them to make sure that those pupils who need further support or further challenge are generally given what they need. In addition, these assessment records are used very effectively to make predictions about future attainment levels for individual pupils, and thus to check on each pupil's progress as they move through the school.
- 2.30 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 pastoral care of the pupils and the arrangements for ensuring their welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The school's aim, of providing care of the highest possible standard within a happy, disciplined and purposeful environment in which every member of the school community is valued, is fully met. The school has continued to build on the strengths in this area reported at the last inspection.
- 3.2 The staff provide highly effective and dedicated support and guidance for all pupils. Pupils are confident that all adults are there for help and guidance and can be approached at any time. Those pupils who have LDD, and those for whom English is an additional language, are given very strong support according to their needs. All staff demonstrate outstanding care and concern for each pupil; they know all pupils extremely well, and the family atmosphere within the school is acknowledged by parents as being of immense value. The care shown for pupils is evident in all areas of school life, including pastoral meetings, lesson time, formal and extra-curricular activities, and in chance encounters between lessons and during breaks. Praise and encouragement are very frequent in and beyond the classroom. Pupils know that they can raise their ideas and concerns, either directly to a member of staff or through the highly successful pupil council which offers a further channel for communication.
- 3.3 The staff are assisted by excellent pastoral arrangements. The pastoral care policy makes it quite clear that every pupil must have a personal point of contact and that their progress must be carefully monitored. Pastoral care is centred on the form group and teacher; informal and formal discussions regularly take place and any pupils causing concern are agenda items at weekly staff and section meetings or briefings. The senior management team are a further support when required. The house system is a valuable vertical arrangement for promoting care and friendly competition. Pupils also support each other; for example, older pupils help the younger ones at lunch by clearing away their plates.
- 3.4 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils is outstanding. Adults and children are very comfortable in each other's company. Staff show their commitment in formal activities, pastoral duties and the organisation of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils work and play very happily together. If an incident arises, teachers and support staff handle the issue sensitively and tactfully, and encourage pupils to apologise and make friends.
- 3.5 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, including procedures to guard against harassment and bullying, are effective. The school's policies are clear and understood by all pupils and staff. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare, but, when they do occur, they are confident that they will be dealt with constructively by the staff or headmaster. Behaviour observed around school and in lessons, games and activities sessions was excellent. The school code reinforces positive messages and staff are strong role models in this respect. Pupils say that the system of rewards and sanctions is fair.
- 3.6 Child protection measures are in place and successful, with a comprehensive policy. A governor has been appointed with responsibility for child protection. Safe recruitment procedures are undertaken on all staff. The designated child protection officers have undergone relevant and certificated training; all staff receive training on a regular basis and are aware of their responsibilities and how to report concerns.

- 3.7 All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. The school maintains the safety and well-being of each pupil as its top priority. Risk assessments, for fire and all other hazards to pupils from buildings or the school curriculum including visits off-site, are in place. Electrical equipment is tested regularly.
- 3.8 Arrangements to ensure health and safety are very effective, and are overseen by the bursar and a governor responsible for health and safety. Issues are discussed at every staff meeting and a significant part of the staff training budget is spent on related matters. First aid procedures are very clear and well known; all staff are trained in first aid, and any accidents are recorded correctly. Pupils are supervised exceptionally well. Lunchtime menus are healthy and nutritious. Admission and attendance registers are kept accurately and attendance is high. Measures are in place to ensure compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. The procedures written in the health and safety policy ensure that pupils are in a safe, healthy and caring environment.
- 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 The school promotes outstanding links with parents and the community, successfully achieving its aim of working in partnership with parents and carers. These links make an important contribution to the life of the school and have improved since the last inspection.
- 3.11 Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of school life. Their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reflected a high degree of satisfaction; they were particularly positive about the help and guidance given to their children, the curriculum offered, the quality of teaching, and the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values by the school. They raised no significant concerns. These sentiments were corroborated in the views expressed by parents in both formal and informal discussions during the inspection; a typical comment was: "I've been a parent here for three years and always felt part of the school."
- 3.12 Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. One parent said: "the atmosphere acts as a magnet to get involved in the school and the children love it!" The parent teacher association (PTA), through a range of activities, for example the annual Christmas dinner and dance, raises considerable funds for the school, recently adding to its resources by providing interactive whiteboards. In addition, a number of social events are organised involving both parents and their children, for example treasure hunts and bedtime story evenings. Parents are invited to many events on the school calendar, such as sports day, class assemblies, and the carol service, and they offer support on school trips. They are also encouraged to be involved in their child's progress; at the beginning of each term, they are asked to help their child focus on targets for work, homework, personal development, personal organisation and behaviour. Those parents of pupils who receive extra support for their learning are involved with their child's regular review and target-setting process. After special events at the school, for example the multi-cultural week, class teachers make books, describing the event in words and pictures or photographs, which are sent home for parents to peruse and comment on, so that they can share in their child's experiences.
- 3.13 Information for parents is very comprehensive. The prospectus contains considerable information about the school, and the website acts as a continuous notice board on the school's activities. Parents new to the school are given a handbook of helpful information. *The Froebelian Digest* is published termly, reflecting the school's activities and

- achievements. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teachers by e-mail if they would like additional information on any issue.
- 3.14 Parents are provided with excellent information about their child's progress. A parents' evening is held for each year group in February. Other formal channels include a report on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in December and a full report in June. These reports are detailed and comprehensive, acknowledging effort, attainment and progress, with a wider comment that includes behaviour and contributions to the corporate life of the school. The December report also contains further targets for the academic year. Additionally, examination results are sent separately to parents in the summer term.
- 3.15 The school handles the concerns of parents with due care. As well as a formal complaints procedure of which parents are made aware, the school places importance on informal channels of communication, and parents are always able to discuss issues without an appointment with either the teachers or headmaster. Parents reiterated that they "can always see the teacher or the headmaster by simply popping into the school."
- 3.16 The school has forged strong links with the community. A wide range of sporting activities are arranged in competition against local schools. Each year, local charities are supported by the school, this year being 'Horsforth's Live at Home' scheme for elderly residents, and Barnardo's. Local people are invited in to speak to the pupils regularly, most recently from the Bradford inter-faith group. The school has enjoyed links with a local teacher training college, usually involving student-teachers gaining experience at The Froebelian as part of their training. Local places of interest form the basis of many trips, giving pupils a greater understanding of the environment around them.
- 3.17 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The School Council members (governors) provide outstanding care for the school and its development. Their overall aim, in which they are successful, is written into the school's modern motto: 'giving a flying start to the citizens of tomorrow.' Since the last inspection, the quality of governance has continued to improve, and major changes to the fabric of the school have included the provision of better classroom accommodation and specialist rooms for art, music and learning support.
- 4.2 Council members have a wide range of experience and expertise and are able to support the school in many ways. All except one are current or former parents of the school. Each council member takes on the responsibility for an aspect of school life; for example, curriculum, child protection, health and safety, and finance, according to their expertise. Their small number means that they are all involved in every discussion and decision across all areas of the school which take place within the five council meetings per year, and their meeting minutes are evidence of this. A committee is formed only when the need arises for further exploration of a particular issue. Council members are very diligent in making well-considered and highly effective provision for the school's accommodation, as evidenced by the improvements in premises since the last inspection, and they ensure that resources, both human and practical, are readily available to supply educational needs. They share with the headmaster a clear vision for the future of the school and are involved in the prioritising of the school development plan. They are very aware of their roles and responsibilities and regularly attend governor training days in order to keep up-to-date on legal issues.
- 4.3 Council members gain good information about the activities of the school in several ways. The headmaster keeps them very well informed through his regular reports for each meeting, and, together with the bursar, reports to the council on day-to-day financial management. Subject co-ordinators also attend meetings in turn to inform the council about developments in their subject. Council members take a great deal of interest in the school community and are well known by staff, parents and pupils. For example, one of the education council members comes to speak to Year 6 pupils each year about transferring to their new schools and helps to prepare them for this important stage in their school careers. An annual dinner is organised by the council members for staff and parents who represent the PTA. This is very well organised and means that a great deal of informal discussion can take place between all parties in this family community. Staff say that the council members have "a genuine love of the school". Contact with the school by the council is strongly supportive but also challenging, and close contact is maintained between the chairman and headmaster. Council members thus keep extremely effective oversight of the school, and they are very well informed of the school's overall development and its successes in academic standards and all activities.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 Strong leadership and management fully support the school's aims, particularly that of providing education and care of the highest possible standard. The high quality leadership reported at the last inspection has been maintained.
- 4.5 The headmaster provides extremely effective leadership, and this is reflected in the good quality of education and the outstanding care of the pupils. He leads by example and is constantly seen around the school. The senior management team, consisting of the deputy head and head of the pre-preparatory department, together with the bursar and the administrative officer, support the headmaster very well. Together they ensure the school's aims are met. Further strong academic support is given by subject co-ordinators, and all staff are fully involved in the excellent pastoral care of pupils. Clear educational direction is given by the senior management team. The school is well aware of the next steps needed to maintain and develop the quality of education which will enable the pupils to continue to achieve good standards. However, whilst the written school development plan is appropriately focused and prioritised on these issues, it does not make clear exactly who is responsible for carrying out each objective, and the financial implications have not been fully explored. Not enough information is given as to how the school will achieve its targets or recognise that it has been successful in achieving them. The headmaster is aware that his vision is not currently expressed clearly enough in written form to enable all staff to take ownership and contribute successfully to its fulfilment.
- 4.6 All aspects of school life are covered by suitable policies, and the school regularly checks and reviews their effectiveness. For example, the pastoral care policy is continually under review through the regular discussion at staff and section meetings of any pupils causing concern, and thus its effectiveness is monitored. Clear academic policies have been prepared by subject co-ordinators in all subjects, and the quality of their planning is good. All departments have recently written a subject action plan, but these are relatively new and do not yet support the school development plan as fully as they could. Subject co-ordinators are involved in monitoring teaching and learning through lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work in their own subjects across the school, and this is undertaken regularly and rigorously. The agenda for staff meetings has a clear focus on teaching and learning.
- 4.7 Across the school, teaching and classroom support staff are deployed extremely well and contribute significantly to pupils' learning and welfare. Staffing levels are very good and enable strong support to be given to pupils, particularly those who have LDD. The recruitment of well-qualified staff is successfully managed, the required staffing checks, including those with the Criminal Records Bureau, are carried out and a centralised record is kept. Induction procedures for staff new to the school, and those new to the profession, support them very effectively. Many in-service training opportunities are available and an effective appraisal system is in place.
- 4.8 Resources for learning, including provision for ICT, are plentiful, competently managed and meet pupils' needs. The well-stocked, if small, library is used by pupils and staff frequently and contributes appropriately to pupils' learning. Procedures for budgeting operate very efficiently.
- 4.9 Arrangements for the day-to-day administration and management of the school work very effectively. The administrative and other support staff, particularly the caretaker, provide high quality assistance, upon which the efficient running of the school depends. Communications, both within the school and with parents and the community, are very strong.

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- 4.10 The school is a productive, busy and welcoming place, and it provides a very caring environment for the pupils. The outstanding accommodation provides spacious classrooms which are used extremely effectively. The school's outdoor space, including tarmac, safety surfaces, a wooded area and a superb adventure playground, provides very well for educational and recreational play. High quality local resources are used to supplement the programme for sports. The bright displays, some of which are outstanding, create an effective learning environment. Pupils say they are happy, and they are clearly proud of their school.
- 4.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.12 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The Froebelian School has many strengths, some of which are outstanding.
- 5.2 The school's success in meeting its aims and aspirations is represented in the excellent personal qualities of its pupils. Teaching is generally good and sometimes outstanding, and, together with the extremely effective support given by teaching assistants, enables pupils to learn and achieve well. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary, and they greatly enjoy the very wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. They are exceptionally well cared for and relationships between all in the school community are very strong. The headmaster leads a dedicated staff team highly effectively, and is very ably supported by the School Council. Excellent links have been forged with parents, and they are very positive about, and supportive of, the educational experiences provided. The quality and maintenance of the school premises are outstanding. Minor issues, concerning the development of teaching, the allocation of time to creative subjects, and the written school development plan, have been raised with the school. The school was aware of some of the issues and staff have already begun discussions on the way forward.
- 5.3 At the time of the last ISI inspection, it was reported that the school had no major shortcomings, and no recommendations were made upon which the school could take action. However, the school has maintained or improved the quality of its educational provision since that time. The last Ofsted nursery inspection reported that the school had no significant weaknesses.
- 5.4 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.5 The school has no significant weaknesses. To improve still further the good quality of its educational provision, the school should:
1. ensure that the best practice in teaching currently within the school is shared, so that all pupils are consistently challenged at their own level of ability;
 2. review the allocation of time to creative subjects and the distribution of all subjects within the timetable;
 3. add further information to the objectives within the school development plan, so that all staff can take ownership and contribute successfully to its fulfilment through their roles as subject co-ordinators.
- 5.6 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 11th to 14th June 2007. 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 to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Elizabeth Coley	Reporting Inspector
Mr John Connor	Headmaster, ISA School
Mrs Caroline Jordin	Head of Pre-Preparatory School, HMC School
Mrs Avril Lomas	Head of Junior School, GSA School