



‘Outstanding’

Early Years Foundation Stage

ISI Report 2015

Preface

This Inspection Report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection occurs over a period of two continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2012.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. 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 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 Education (DfE) 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, although inspectors 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.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Inspection Evidence

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of 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 regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Bridget Forrest
Miss Philippa Gent

Early Years Lead Inspector
Team Inspector for Early Years
(Head of Pre-Preparatory School, IAPS school)

The school was then given judgements in 4 key areas:

1. How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

2. The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being.

3. The leadership and management of the early years provision.

4. The overall quality and standards of the early years provision.

In each of these areas we could achieve one of the following judgements:

- **Outstanding** – the highest possible grade meaning the majority of this area has been assessed as the highest quality.
- **Good** – the majority of this area is assessed as being good.
- **Satisfactory** – some of this area is good and the weaknesses are not widespread.
- **Unsatisfactory** – this area is mainly weak.

If you wish to view the full official ISI report please visit our website www.ardingly.com

1. The characteristics of the School

1.1 Ardingly College Preparatory School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of 2 and 13. It is part of Ardingly College, a school in the Woodard Corporation, which was founded by Canon Nathaniel Woodard in Shoreham in 1858 and moved to its present location near Haywards Heath in Sussex in 1870. The preparatory school was founded in 1912. Ardingly College is governed by a board of governors known as the School Council. The school chaplain is responsible directly to the Woodard Corporation. The headmaster of the senior school has overall responsibility for all sections of the college but the head of the preparatory school has operational responsibility for both the preparatory and pre-preparatory departments. The latter has its own headmistress and includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

1.2 The school aims to enable all pupils to develop their love of learning, academic potential and individual talents in a community that fosters sensitivity, confidence, a sense of service and enthusiasm for life. It strives to nurture each pupil as an individual, seeking that pupils acquire the moral basis and interpersonal skills that will ensure that they are valued and useful members of society. Since the previous inspection, the school has completed a significant refurbishment programme to its classrooms. The EYFS setting has admitted two year olds, and three to five year olds are exempted from the EYFS learning and development requirements.

1.3 The EYFS setting is housed in converted farm buildings, which form a self-contained unit within the school grounds. Currently, 374 pupils attend the preparatory school, 50 of whom are children in the EYFS. Before- and after-school care is provided. Pupils are mainly from business and professional families and most come from the local area.

1.4 The setting has identified five pupils as requiring some degree of learning support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and eight pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).

1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. Summary

(i) Compliance with statutory requirements

2.1 The School's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Extend the opportunities for parents to be involved in the development of their children's learning to further promote their own understanding of the EYFS.



How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend was judged to be **outstanding**.

The school “successfully fulfils its aim of nurturing each child as an individual and of developing children’s love of learning by offering excellent educational programmes within a safe, happy, stimulating and creative environment”.

3. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

3.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. It successfully fulfils its aim of nurturing each child as an individual and of developing children’s love of learning by offering excellent educational programmes within a safe, happy, stimulating and creative environment, with an emphasis on encouraging brave learning, clever thinking and kindness. Excellent teaching and a high staff to pupil ratio, together with challenging experiences and an effective balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning, support and enable children to acquire the skills to learn effectively, and to reach and often exceed expected levels of development for their age. Those with SEND or EAL are identified early by staff and given extra support where needed. A broad curriculum, with the addition of specialist teaching in French, dance and swimming, is provided both indoors and in the outside areas, which are freely accessed by children. The recommendation of the previous inspection to cover all areas of learning in the outside classroom has been implemented successfully. Children are motivated by the high expectations of staff, for example when they encouraged Reception to be brave enough to attempt a challenging jump in physical education. All children in the Nursery, including the under-threes, are given the opportunity and support to articulate their own ideas and suggestions on a range of topics. Highly skilled staff support children’s thinking skills through open questioning and by encouraging sustained thinking, for example when Reception children discussed the merits and pitfalls of the fictional three pigs’ houses. Planning and assessment are detailed and thorough, and the setting has successfully implemented an electronic observation system that includes tracking progress and setting the next steps for each child.



3.2 Links with parents are excellent. The response to the parents' questionnaires was extremely positive. Parents appreciate the excellent communication they have with the setting and are highly pleased to have the opportunity to share their children's learning journals live online. They feel that the school listens to them and deals effectively with their queries and suggestions. They say that they are given excellent information about the curriculum but are not offered workshops to experience what the children do first-hand in order to further their own understanding of the EYFS. Inspectors judge that opportunities to help parents to understand how their children learn are somewhat limited. Reports to parents are of high quality and include targets.



The provision to children's well-being was judged to be **outstanding**.

“Children show high levels of self-control and confidence and are extremely happy and involved in their tasks”.

3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being.

3.3 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Understanding children's individual needs is central to the setting and staff prepare children very well for transition to the next stage of their learning. Children form strong and secure attachments with those who care for them; staff support them where needed and encourage them to manage their own personal needs and hygiene. Children are guided in washing their hands thoroughly, and gain a clear understanding about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise through the clear messages of the staff. Staff give children many opportunities to develop independence. They encourage younger Nursery children to decide what they need to wear before they venture out into the cold air.

3.4 Staff are excellent role models, promoting co-operation and high standards of behaviour within a calm and caring atmosphere, where children talk freely and happily to adults. Consequently, children show high levels of self-control and confidence, and are extremely happy and involved in their tasks. Staff celebrate children's achievements, and children in Reception are proud to explain why they are given their special 'kindness', 'clever thinker' and 'brave learning' stickers. Imaginative activities are planned to encourage children to explore their surroundings, take calculated risks and solve problems. Highly stimulating and child-accessible resources challenge children both inside and outdoors.

The leadership and management of the early years provision was judged to be **outstanding**.

“Those leading the EYFS have an excellent and secure understanding of the learning and development requirements that apply to the younger children”.

3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision.

3.5 Leadership and management are outstanding and a particular strength of the setting. The recently appointed EYFS link governor takes an active role in the work of the setting. Governors work regularly with staff to review and update policies. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met and implemented rigorously, creating a caring, safe environment. Those leading the EYFS have an excellent and secure understanding of the learning and development requirements that apply to the younger children, and their implementation within the setting's creative curriculum. Risk assessment is thorough and kept up to date. Strong recruitment procedures, which meet the latest requirements, ensure that children are kept safe. Practitioners work very successfully together as a professional and dedicated team, evaluating their practice and ensuring continuous improvement. The supervision role is well established and staff find it very effective. They have many opportunities to further their own professional development, which contributes positively to their teaching and consequently to children's learning and development. Children's needs are quickly identified and staff have developed strong links with parents and external agencies, such as speech and language experts, so that children promptly receive the support they need.



The overall quality and standards of the early years provision was judged to be **outstanding**.

“Children are enthusiastic learners who make excellent progress in relation to their starting points”.

3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision.

3.6 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. Children are enthusiastic learners who make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Children in Reception use their phonics to decode simple words, and they independently wrote a ‘get well soon’ card to their friend and a ‘Do not sit here’ label for a chair that was being fixed. They learn to add and subtract numbers. They follow photographic clues and use positional language successfully when pretending to seek treasure in the outdoor area. Nursery children self-register by finding their own names. They order numbers from 1 to 10, learn their sounds and begin to form their letters correctly. They highly enjoy choosing library books. Two year olds can recognise and name shapes. They can count the buttons on a snowman and identify colours. They learn to use tablet computers correctly. They share costumes during role play and are kind friends who comfort one another. Children throughout the setting are articulate, confident and independent. The youngest children can be relied upon to take messages to their key person. Older Nursery children pour their own drinks at snack times. They know when they need to wash their hands, and understand about healthy eating and the need to drink water. Reception children clear away their plates after lunch.

3.7 All requirements for safety and welfare have been met, and staff work together with a shared responsibility and understanding of how to protect the children in their care and cater for all needs. They continuously evaluate their provision. The setting's leadership staff have a clear plan for the future development of the provision. Its priorities reflect the views of staff, children and their parents.



www.ardingly.com