



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CRACKLEY HALL SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Crackley Hall School
DfE Number	937/6001
EYFS Number	EY307903
Registered Charity Number	1087124
Address	Crackley Hall School St Joseph's Park Kenilworth Warwickshire CV8 2FT
Telephone Number	01926 514444
Fax Number	01926 514455
Email Address	post@crackleyhall.co.uk
Head	Mr Robert Duigan
Chair of Trustees	Mrs Mary O'Farrell
Age Range	2 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	267
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (160 boys; 107 girls;)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 12 5-11: 207 3-5 (EYFS): 48
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Julie Habaoui
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	14 Oct 2014 to 15 Oct 2014

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 October 2011.

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 the chair of trustees, 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 Gillian Bilbo

Mrs Anne Oliver

Early Years Lead Inspector

Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of Lower
Prep, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Crackley Hall School, which includes Little Crackers Nursery, is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from 2 to 11. Originally founded as a convent in the nineteenth century, it merged with Princethorpe College in 2001 and with Abbotsford School in 2010. It is part of the Princethorpe Foundation, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, administered by a Board of Trustees. The Foundation welcomes children of all denominations and, within its Catholic ethos, aims to engender a caring Christian environment where everybody is celebrated, creating a safe school in which to love, learn and grow.
- 1.2 The school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS], is situated in a former country house at St Joseph's Park on the outskirts of the town of Kenilworth in Warwickshire. The school serves a wide catchment area with pupils drawn from professional, business and farming families. A small minority represent a range of cultures.
- 1.3 The EYFS occupies its own area of the school. It shares the dining room, hall and outdoor play and learning areas with the rest of the school. The Nursery accepts children from the ages of two to four and is open for 48 weeks of the year. A range of sessions is offered including after school care. The Reception class, situated next to the Nursery, accommodates children from the age of four to five. Since the previous inspection, the Nursery has been redecorated, cloakrooms have been added for Reception, and the provision of day-care for younger children has been extended.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 267 pupils on the school roll of whom 60 were in the EYFS. Twelve were under the age of three. Children may attend on a sessional basis until they enter Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. There are 16 who children attend full time in Reception, 8 boys and 8 girls. There are six pupils who have English as an additional language, although none needs additional tuition. There are four children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the EYFS has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table(s).

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Terrific twos	Nursery 2-3 years
Thrilling threes	Nursery 3-4 years
Fabulous fours	Nursery 3-4 years
Reception	Reception 4-5 years

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. Ensure that use of outdoor facilities is an integral part of the free flow of activities between the classroom and outdoor learning areas.

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 In meeting the needs of the range of children who attend, the setting is outstanding. Careful planning of educational programmes ensures that children throughout the setting reach their expected levels of development and many exceed them. The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching in music and movement and French in the Nursery; drama, physical education and Mandarin are added in Reception. Extra-curricular activities include ballet, chess, judo and Irish dancing.
- 3.2 The suitable balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities provides stimulating opportunities to explore and learn in the richly resourced environment. The dedicated outdoor play area, including a protective canopy, is equipped for children to develop gross motor skills and to take assessed risks; for example children challenge themselves successfully on the climbing frame. The outdoor classroom is used imaginatively to enhance the curriculum, for example by providing an exciting sylvan setting for Nursery children to go on a bear hunt. However, these outdoor facilities are not fully included in the planning of free-flow activities as they cannot be accessed directly from the classrooms.
- 3.3 Focused observations and an appropriate range of baseline tests, closely matched to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, provide an effective starting point to whole school assessment in the next stage of learning. For example, golden books are used to track progress in writing throughout the school. Checks at age two are followed up when a child joins the setting. Personal learning journals, punctiliously maintained by key staff, record each child's achievements and these can be accessed by parents at any time.
- 3.4 Throughout the setting, the consistent use of a wide range of multi-sensory teaching methods effectively engages and retains every child's attention. For example, in a Nursery music session, singing and dancing games were successfully accessed by all ages and cultural backgrounds. Specialist provision, including speech and language therapy, ensures that the children's individual learning needs are met. Outside agencies are consulted as necessary.
- 3.5 Responses to a pre-inspection questionnaire and interviews during the inspection show parents to be overwhelmingly positive about the school. They especially appreciate the safe and happy environment, timely responses to any concerns and the quality of the reporting on their child's progress. These reports include clearly identified targets for improvement. The highly effective parent-teacher association helps new parents integrate into the life of the school and organises social and fund raising events for both the school and for charity. Strong links with the community are forged for example by play sessions held in the setting and by support for local church playgroups.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of the EYFS provision to children's well-being is outstanding. Throughout the setting children receive warm and responsive care from adults, enabling them to feel happy, confident and secure. Key persons communicate effectively with parents and carers, involving and supporting them in their child's learning and development.
- 3.7 Staff act as excellent role models, setting the boundaries for acceptable behaviour effectively and rewarding positive contributions. Established routines for moving around the school, for example holding the handrails when using the stairs, encourage the children to look after themselves. Children under three learn to share, for example when building models with their peers. They prepare independently for water play by putting on their aprons. Opportunities for imaginative role play, currently the mechanic's workshop, reflect the children's interests. Robust adherence to safeguarding procedures ensures the children's security at all times.
- 3.8 The setting promotes a positive attitude to healthy eating and exercise, providing nutritious and balanced menus and access to drinking water. Parental choices of lunch for their children are carefully delivered and good manners gently encouraged. Opportunities to gain independence in the dining room are limited, although older children are able to choose and serve items from the salad bar. Children are supported sensitively in learning to manage their personal hygiene and to wash their hands before eating. Strict protocols are observed for children in nappies and staff work collaboratively with parents to establish routines for children who are not fully trained. Sleeping children are always regularly observed.
- 3.9 Highly effective strategies support transitions between classes. Children in the Nursery visit Reception in the summer term and know staff well. The move to Year 1 is eased by the adoption of an initial EYFS approach to classroom practice which is gradually lessened as the children progress through the year.

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

- 3.10 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Exemplary monitoring by the Board of Trustees ensures that protocols are observed and that the Board is very well informed about activities within the setting. Highly effective day-to-day management is strengthened by the close co-operation between senior leaders and regular professional dialogue between them and other staff.
- 3.11 Stringent adherence to safeguarding and recruitment procedures, supported by regular risk assessments and effective maintenance and cleaning systems, ensures a welcoming and safe environment. Training in safeguarding, paediatric first aid and health and safety procedures forms part of the induction process for new staff and is rigorously renewed.
- 3.12 Inclusion in local moderation sessions and in-house monitoring activities provide an effective vehicle for self-evaluation of educational programmes. Managers ensure that staff are fully aware of current requirements and supervision sessions provide an opportunity to discuss any practitioner's personal or professional concerns. An effective system of staff appraisal identifies training needs and opportunities for the personal development of staff in the setting.

- 3.13 The school development plan includes initiatives from the EYFS, for example in the areas of staffing, methodology and resources.
- 3.14 Productive partnership with parents and links with outside agencies secure appropriate interventions and support to ensure that each child's needs are fully met.

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

- 3.15 The overall quality and standards of the provision is outstanding. Most children, including those with SEND and EAL, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Most achieve, and many exceed, expected levels at the end of Reception, making particularly good progress in reading. Careful tracking of progress through the Nursery ensures that most children leave the nursery at the expected levels of development for their age.
- 3.16 Children in Reception apply their developing phonic skills to independent writing and many can recognise and blend letter sounds to read simple words. They work confidently with numbers to 20 and upwards, understand the meaning of one more and one less and can order objects according to size. Nursery children develop their numeracy skills in regular counting activities and buying items from the class shop. They demonstrate competent use of the mouse when using a painting programme. Interactive white boards are used to support learning across the curriculum, for example displaying characters in a Reception Mandarin lesson and in activities to develop number skills in the Nursery.
- 3.17 Children enjoy their learning and interact co-operatively with their peers. In a Nursery music and movement lesson, the children were carefully paired up and joined in successfully with an action song together. They are equally happy to play alone, for example in the younger Nursery class taking snapshots of the teacher.
- 3.18 Children are encouraged to be creative, think critically and explore their surroundings. In Reception, children experimented to find out what happens when a sticky material is dropped from a great height, showing excitement at the outcome. In the class for two-year olds, careful discussion resulted in the comparison of the sounds heard when two different shells are held to the ears and the activity was usefully extended to find out what happens when a larger shell is used.
- 3.19 Children feel secure and respect the clear boundaries set for behaviour and respond positively to the system of rewards, enthusiastically collecting counters for their house. Any disputes are quietly resolved. Children enjoy sharing experiences from home on their 'wow' slips and staff actively incorporate personal interests, for example, the rainbow fish collage made by the older Nursery children.
- 3.20 Safeguarding requirements are fully met, understood and implemented.
- 3.21 Since the previous inspection, links across the setting have been strengthened and the EYFS has been included in the whole school assessment framework. Ongoing self-evaluation provides for continuous improvement of the setting.