



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BEECH HALL SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Beech Hall School
DfE Number	875/6008
EYFS Number	304971
Registered Charity Number	878481
Address	Beech Hall School Beech Hall Drive Tytherington Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 2EG
Telephone Number	01625 422192
Fax Number	01625 502424
Email Address	head_beechhall@yahoo.co.uk
Headmistress	Mrs Geraldine Yandell
Chair of Governors	Mr Eamonn McGrath
Age Range	6 months to 16 years
Total Number of Pupils	212
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (115 boys; 97 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 57 5-11: 59 3-5 (EYFS): 43 11-16: 53
EYFS Gender	Mixed (48 boys; 52 girls)
Inspection dates	24 Jan 2012 to 27 Jan 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2008.

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. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

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

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning 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 31st 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, 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.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The grades used by ISI and Ofsted are different to reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and for Achievement the descriptor 'exceptional' is available in addition.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' 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. 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

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)

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Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Beech Hall is a co-educational day school for pupils aged between 6 months and 16 years. Situated in 16 acres of parkland on the outskirts of the town of Macclesfield in Cheshire, it was founded in 1926 as a preparatory boarding school for boys. Girls were admitted to the school in 1981 and the Nursery was opened in 1993. Originally privately owned, the school has been administered by a limited company and charitable trust since 1966 and is managed by a governing body. Since the previous inspection several areas of the school have been refurbished. The present headmistress took up post in September 2010.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning within small classes and to ensure that pupils gain an all-round education within a stimulating and supportive environment. Furthermore, it wishes them to develop a sense of direction and purpose, whilst seeking to foster independence, tolerance and adaptability.
- 1.3 The school currently has 212 pupils on roll. In total, 86 of these, of whom 43 are boys and 43 are girls, attend part-time in the Nursery classes of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and a further 14 children are in Reception. Of these, 5 are boys and 9 are girls. There are 8 boys and 10 girls in the Infants School, for Years 1 and 2, and 23 boys and 18 girls in the Junior School, for Years 3 to 6. There are 36 boys and 17 girls in the Senior School, for Years 7 to 11.
- 1.4 Most pupils live locally and a small number travel from Greater Manchester and other parts of Cheshire. The majority of pupils' parents work in professional or business occupations. Pupils are predominantly of white British heritage. A small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and from a range of European countries have English as an additional language. All are fluent in English and require no support from the school.
- 1.5 Thirty-nine pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All receive additional support from the school. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The ability profile of the school is in line with the national average.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school from Reception to Year 11 and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the Nursery and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Little Griffins	Nursery

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school fulfils its aims successfully throughout, including the EYFS. Pupils are well educated and achieve good standards in relation to their starting points. They have excellent attitudes, apply themselves conscientiously to their work and are articulate. The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' development. It has been improved by the strengthening of personal, social and health education (PSHE) in the Senior School. Learning experiences are enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits. The school has good community links. Teaching is good overall and assessment procedures are effective. Pupils with SEND achieve well and make good and sometimes rapid progress because of the excellent support they receive. More able pupils and those with particular talents also make good progress.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils throughout the school is excellent, and is supported by the excellent pastoral care and good welfare, health and safety procedures. Pupils of all ages are tolerant and respectful of each other and collaborate well when working together. Older pupils develop supportive relationships with younger ones, and throughout the school pupils' responsibilities are extensive. Thorough checks are carried out for any health and safety issues, risk assessments are detailed and the safeguarding of pupils is robust. Pupils receive good encouragement to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- 2.3 Governance is good and in line with the aims of the school. Governors understand and assume responsibility for child protection, welfare, health and safety. The governing body has overseen the implementation of most of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Leadership and management of the school are good overall. Since the previous inspection, some progress has been made in improving the management structure of the school, and in particular, the effectiveness of teaching and learning across all age groups. However, monitoring and evaluation are not yet fully embedded. The school's development plan is detailed but does not reflect the views of the whole school community, lacks a sense of priority and does not clearly lay out implications of cost. Throughout the school links with parents are good, and most parents are extremely appreciative of all aspects of school life and would recommend the school to others. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of parents indicated that they do not feel the school offers an appropriate range of subjects or extra-curricular activities. A small minority do not consider that the school deals effectively with any cases of bullying or that concerns are handled well. A small number of parents do not consider that they receive timely responses to their questions or that the school is well managed. No evidence to support any of these views was found during the inspection.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Seek to reduce the workload of senior managers so that monitoring of the curriculum and all other aspects of school life is more rigorous.
 2. Develop the school improvement plan to include input from the whole school community, whilst detailing financial implications and indicating how priorities are to be achieved.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The overall achievement of the pupils is good.
- 3.2 From the EYFS onwards, pupils benefit greatly from their education, in line with the aims of the school. Pupils develop good knowledge, skills and understanding of a range of subjects, whatever their ability. Literacy and numeracy skills develop well and pupils are articulate and willing to experiment with new vocabulary. By Year 2, pupils write simple, accurate sentences independently and by Year 6 they produce imaginative, well-constructed and grammatical poems. By the time pupils reach Year 11, many write with maturity and show good logical thinking. Pupils apply their numeracy skills to present their findings in a range of subjects to good effect, for instance in science and in geography. At all ages, pupils develop high levels of creativity, particularly in art, music and drama, and many pupils recall their enjoyment of taking part in performances at school and in the wider community. Pupils' skills in independent learning, exploration and experimentation are well developed because they are given sufficient opportunities to practise these skills.
- 3.3 At the age of 16, the considerable majority of pupils transfer to their first choice of sixth form in local senior schools or sixth-form colleges. They also achieve well in individual and team games, notably in netball, hockey, football, rugby and swimming. High standards are reached in various music examinations, as well as in speech and drama, and design competitions. These successes make a significant contribution to excellent personal development, giving pupils a greater understanding of teamwork as well as a respect for differing abilities.
- 3.4 All pupils make good progress over time in relation to their abilities, which are in line with national expectations. In the Junior School, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national norms, but on the evidence available is judged to be good in relation to age-related expectations. Inspection evidence includes consideration of the levels at which pupils are working in relation to national targets. These levels of attainment indicate that pupils make good rates of progress in relation to pupils of similar abilities. At GCSE level, results have been good in comparison with the national average for maintained secondary schools and have shown steady improvement since 2008. In 2011, 83 per cent of pupils achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to C.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEND and those who find some aspects of their learning more difficult make good progress, and rapid progress is made when they receive individual support, as seen in lessons, in the scrutiny samples of their work and from assessment data. Pupils with particular talents and more able pupils also achieve well.
- 3.6 Pupils are good and enthusiastic learners, and at all stages they work well collaboratively and show enjoyment, energetic application and perseverance. Pride is taken in presentation and in the achievement of personal targets. Participation in class discussion, irrespective of age or academic ability, is considerable, and is fostered by a genuine interest in what fellow pupils have to say and by pupils' good relationships with supportive teaching staff. Pupils of all ages are keen to show their work and to talk about their learning. In almost all lessons observed, behaviour in class was exemplary.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.7 Curricular and extra-curricular provision throughout the school is good.
- 3.8 The broad and balanced range of subjects makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievements and learning, in line with the school's aims. Pupils gain worthwhile experience in all the required areas, including scientific, creative, human and social, aesthetic, practical and technological subjects. French enhances linguistic provision and is taught from the Nursery upwards. Senior pupils are also taught German. The Junior School curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching in art, music, physical education and science, and design technology in Year 6. Curricular provision in the Senior School has been strengthened since the previous inspection with the addition of PSHE, which is now taught as a discrete subject. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their critical thinking and independent research skills, and to use their well-developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- 3.9 The school offers a wide range of GCSE options and works hard to accommodate the option choices of all pupils. Three separate sciences are offered, as well as two modern foreign languages. The majority of parents are extremely happy with the educational experience the school offers its pupils. A small number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that the range of subjects offered is not appropriate. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.
- 3.10 Planning documentation is produced for each subject, but the quality is variable. Where it is produced well, it indicates how pupils' differing needs are to be met, and also identifies opportunities for assessment.
- 3.11 The curriculum is appropriate for different abilities and ages. The excellent provision made for pupils with SEND is a significant strength of the school. Pupils receive highly effective guidance and one-to-one support from specialist teachers, and strong assistance from staff within the classroom. They are provided with individual education plans which contain appropriate targets regularly reviewed with them, and with staff and parents. The procedures to identify gifted and talented pupils are not formalised, but most teachers are aware of these pupils and take account of their needs in their lesson planning.
- 3.12 There is a wide variety of well-supported extra-curricular activities that serve to enrich and broaden the pupils' educational experience. A minority of parents indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they do not feel the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection findings do not concur with these views: inspectors found that pupils of all ages are able to participate in a good range of musical, sporting and other interesting clubs and activities.
- 3.13 The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of visitors and by visits to local places of interest, including museums, theatres and places of religious worship. An excellent variety of residential visits and the highly successful programmes of outdoor pursuits make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, providing effective opportunities for the development of leadership and team-building skills. Pupils benefit from the school's positive links with the community and from many opportunities to contribute and to serve, for example through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Good links have been made with a local church, where a whole-school service is held each term.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good.
- 3.15 Teaching supports pupils' achievement effectively and fulfils the aims of the school in promoting their self-confidence and developing lively and enquiring minds. On occasion, teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 In all sections of the school teachers know their pupils well, and the high quality relationships, together with the generous adult to pupil ratio, enhance the quality of teaching considerably. The atmosphere in lessons is positive and conducive to learning, and staff are committed to supporting and providing pupils with generous levels of individual help. The majority of pupils and their parents believe that teachers help pupils to make good progress, and inspectors agree.
- 3.17 Specialist subject teaching is progressively introduced as pupils move through the school, and most teaching demonstrates a confident knowledge of subjects and a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of pupils. The majority of lessons are well planned and employ effective teaching methods with a good variety of activities. In the best lessons, enthusiastic teaching includes high expectations, shared learning objectives and effective questioning techniques enabling all pupils, including more able pupils and those with SEND, to achieve well and to engage fully both in and out of the classroom. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions and contribute to discussions without fear of failure, in line with the school's mission statement. The small minority of less successful lessons are characterised by a lack of pace and pupils are not encouraged to ask questions or to use their own thinking skills. In these lessons progress is less rapid.
- 3.18 Teachers assess pupils' work regularly. Since the previous inspection, a whole-school marking and assessment policy has been adopted. However, there remains variation in its implementation and in the quality of marking overall. All work is marked, but the quality of the marking is inconsistent throughout the school. The best includes positive comments and explains to pupils how they may improve their work. Useful verbal feedback is provided in the Junior School. However, as this is not regularly recorded in books, pupils are not always able to recall what they need to do in order to improve their work.
- 3.19 In both the Junior School and the Senior School a range of standardised tests is used to measure progress. These give reliable benchmarks and useful data to inform teachers' future planning. The use of this data to track pupils' progress is improving and the information is transferred effectively as pupils move up through the school. Since the previous inspection, a good system of regular target setting has been introduced. Targets are shared with parents and inform pupils of the way forward in their learning.
- 3.20 Resources support learning suitably and are used appropriately. Teachers throughout the school use ICT effectively as a tool to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, a Senior School library provides effective reference facilities for both staff and pupils. The Junior School libraries support teaching and learning well.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent by the time they leave school. The school's aim to provide a stimulating and supportive environment that addresses pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met extremely effectively. Pupils develop excellent understanding of these aspects of life through many areas of the curriculum and demonstrate a well-developed awareness of others' needs and the needs of the world outside the school. At all stages, pupils are considerate and helpful, and show respect for each other's differences.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is good. They benefit from the opportunities that assemblies, PSHE and religious education (RE) provide to consider, explore and reflect upon ideas and non-material aspects of life. 'Circle time' for younger pupils effectively provides opportunities for the exploration of feelings and emotions appropriate to their ages. Pupils throughout the school respond enthusiastically to discussions in class and reflection on issues such as differences between people and the uniqueness of each individual. Older pupils are able to express their understanding of religious symbolism, as exemplified in an English lesson on a Blessing poem from India.
- 4.4 Moral development at all ages throughout the school is excellent. Pupils demonstrate a highly developed sense of right and wrong; of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They act responsibly, and clearly understand and appreciate the fairness of the school's sanctions and rewards. Weekly house meetings for junior and senior pupils are enjoyed as they celebrate each other's achievements. Pupils demonstrate their strong moral conscience by actively raising funds for many local, national and international charities. They are aware of environmental responsibilities towards sustainability, as demonstrated by their participation in 'eco' challenges, and in science lessons in their exploration of acid rain and biodegradable materials. Senior pupils know that their views are listened to through the school council and that thoughtful representation can bring change.
- 4.5 In all parts of the school, pupils' social development is excellent. They are at ease talking with adults and with each other. They are articulate, polite and helpful, and enjoy the variety of opportunities they have to take on leadership roles. In both junior and senior sections of the school, they take pleasure in the responsibilities of being prefects, house captains and sports captains. They represent the school exceptionally well when showing visitors around, and respond to adults with confidence. Younger pupils take pride in being helpful in the classroom, for instance returning registers and distributing equipment.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural awareness and understanding are good. They demonstrate a good understanding of the practices, beliefs and arts of other cultures and religions through exploration in many areas of the curriculum, for example in their role play of the l'Epiphane festival. Junior pupils display a good understanding of ways of life of ancient civilisations studied in history and RE, and pupils throughout the school show great enjoyment and interest in poetry from both ancient and modern civilisations. Pupils develop a good awareness of their own culture when they visit museums and theatres, and have a strong understanding of the diversity of people living in the United Kingdom.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.7 Pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Throughout the whole school community, the staff, strongly led by the headmistress, provide outstanding guidance for all pupils, in line with the school's aims. Relationships amongst pupils are excellent. Junior and senior pupils work well together in weekly house meetings and younger pupils befriend and support each other at break times. Junior School pupils are confident that teachers listen to their views and Senior School pupils clearly understand the function of the school council as a vehicle for putting forward their concerns and ideas. Across the school, pupils are naturally kind to each other.
- 4.9 The school has strong and effective procedures to promote pupils' good behaviour and to guard against harassment and bullying. Most pupils and parents are confident that the school takes appropriate measures against any bullying that may occur, and in interviews pupils said they are confident that they can seek help or advice from any member of staff or pupil. A minority of both parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires do not consider that the school deals appropriately with any bullying that may occur. Inspectors made a thorough investigation and their findings do not support these views.
- 4.10 Pupils have a clear understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and most participate in the excellent range of physical activities. Pupils of all ages understand the importance of healthy eating, and enjoy the tasty and nutritious meal choices provided.
- 4.11 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.12 The provision the school makes for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is good.
- 4.13 Safe recruitment procedures are followed carefully. All staff receive child protection training, which is updated appropriately. The safeguarding policy and procedures are well understood within the school and are reviewed annually by senior managers and governors. Risk assessments are efficiently carried out, both within the school and on external trips. They are thorough, and all necessary contingencies are covered in detail. If necessary, staff visit the site proposed for a visit so that accurate assessments can be made.
- 4.14 Measures are in place to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards; regular fire drills are held and staff receive fire training. Electrical testing is carried out, and health and safety documentation is thorough. Pupils who become ill or require first aid receive immediate attention. A good number of staff are suitably qualified in first aid, including sufficient numbers trained in paediatric first aid. The medical room is appropriately and centrally located. The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored. This has addressed the situation at the time of the previous inspection, when the admission register had not been maintained correctly.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body is loyally committed to the school and carefully manages its financial viability. It helps to maintain the school's aims to support the pupils' personal and academic development. Governors offer a good range of expertise and experience, and many are parents of current pupils or have long-standing links with the school, and are therefore in a strong position to set appropriate aims and values in keeping with the school's ethos.
- 5.3 The chair of governors is in regular contact with the headmistress and provides excellent advice and support. The headmistress prepares full reports for the board. These provide good information about the school's successes and challenges for the future. Consequently, governors are generally well informed about all aspects of the work of the school. Governors attend the school for special events such as concerts and performances, and the chair of governors meets with staff each term.
- 5.4 The governing body discharges its statutory duties appropriately, including those for safeguarding, and for health and safety. One governor has responsibility for child protection and a number are actively involved in selecting and appointing teaching staff. The governing body has overseen the implementation of most of the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.5 Leadership and management are good overall.
- 5.6 These aspects ensure good links with parents, carers and guardians. The school has clear aims and a mission statement that contribute effectively to its ethos of care.
- 5.7 The strong leadership of the headmistress and the dedicated group of staff is clearly evident in the good standards of pupils' achievements, as well as in the excellence of their personal development. Since the previous inspection, some progress has been made in improving the management structure of the school, and in particular, improving the effectiveness of monitoring teaching and learning across all age groups. However, the workload of senior managers remains high and a sufficiently well-structured and rigorous monitoring programme is still lacking.
- 5.8 The small size of the school promotes easy and informal communication and sharing of information. Good systems and policies are in place to ensure continuity and consistency of practice across departments and year groups, particularly to ensure a smooth transition from the EYFS, and from the Junior School to the Senior School. Effective support and guidance are provided for those pupils transferring to a sixth form, school or college.
- 5.9 The current school development plan is detailed and linked closely to the school's aims. It sets out relevant areas for improvement, but does not reflect the views of

the whole school community; lacks a sense of priority and does not clearly lay out implications of cost, making it less effective as a working tool.

- 5.10 The procedures for recruiting staff are good and meet all requirements for safeguarding. Staff are appropriately trained for their roles in safeguarding, health and safety. Staff are deployed effectively, to the pupils' best advantage. Support staff and non-teaching staff make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and academic development within the school community. All teachers are involved in a regular appraisal system linked to their professional development.
- 5.11 Links with parents are good and support the academic and personal development aims of the school. The school maintains many open and varied channels of communication, and actively encourages parents to liaise closely with staff and play a full part in the education of their children.
- 5.12 The 'open door' policy encourages parents to come into school to discuss any concerns and most parents are happy with these arrangements. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of parents indicated that their concerns have not been handled well. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views. The school has clear procedures for dealing with parental complaints and any concerns are dealt with sensitively in line with school policy.
- 5.13 Information flows freely from the school to parents in a variety of ways. A weekly newsletter provides useful information on school events and on individual and group achievements, and the prospectus and website are both helpful for parents of current and prospective pupils. Parents of older pupils receive regular grade sheets and a full report twice a year. These reports are detailed and of good quality, presenting a clear picture of pupils' achievements and showing targets for improvement. Whilst there are two parents' evenings a year, teachers and parents also regularly communicate easily on a less formal basis.
- 5.14 Parents have ample opportunity to be involved in the life of the school. They are welcomed into school for special events, such as assemblies and concerts; and they help with, and participate in, extra-curricular activities. Parents routinely support other parents who are new to Beech Hall, introducing them to the life of the school. A thriving parents' association arranges well-supported social events for both parents and pupils, and raises much appreciated funds for the school.
- 5.15 Most parents are extremely happy with all aspects of school life, and particularly with the care and support that their children receive. A small minority of parents indicated that they are not happy with the care their children receive. The inspectors found no evidence to support these views and judge that pupils throughout the school are cared for exceptionally well.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding and meets the needs of the children exceptionally well. Strong teaching and extremely good interactions between staff and children contribute significantly to children's high levels of achievement. The enthusiastic and energetic staff team works consistently and effectively to sustain high standards and continuously improve practice in the setting.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. All records, policies and procedures necessary for the efficient management of the setting and safety of the children, including those to promote equal opportunities, are in place and implemented well, and risk assessments are regularly carried out for all areas and activities. Adults have extensive knowledge and skills in promoting children's welfare and supporting their learning, development and well-being. Children are safeguarded and cared for very well. The leadership of the EYFS has a clear vision and an excellent understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses, and ensures constant refinement and evaluation of practice. Staff are suitably qualified and well deployed. An outstanding partnership with parents, and strong links with the local authority and external agencies, enrich and support children's education and care.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. Children learn and develop exceptionally well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. Activities are planned around the welfare and interests of the children. Regular, well-documented initial and ongoing observational assessments record progress for all ages. They clearly identify what children can do and the next steps they need to take to progress, and allow staff to challenge each child to move on at the appropriate time. Children have easy access to a wide range of excellent resources that they use enthusiastically. Babies and the youngest children have secure relationships with their key person, who regularly communicates with parents, and guides and supports them well through safe and clear routines. Children enjoy the healthy snacks provided for them and the sociable nature of snack time and lunchtime, which encourages independence and good manners.

6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 6.4 Outcomes for the children are outstanding. From their different starting points they are making substantial progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. Babies exhibit curiosity and make rapid progress because of the exceptional care they receive, and very young children are confident and socially well adjusted, and they have excellent physical skills. All children make rapid progress and show high levels of independence in their learning. Younger children begin to recognise letters and by the end of Reception, children use their phonic knowledge confidently to write independently. They are able to use simple number bonds and can recognise numbers to 20 and beyond. They make significant progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, developing strong observational and investigative skills, and use computers with confidence. They enjoy their learning both indoors and out. Their independence is clear and they take diligent responsibility for various tasks asked of them. Behaviour is exemplary and is managed effectively through gentle reminders and the underlying rules and expectations of the setting.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.