



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

WESTHOLME SCHOOL
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

19 to 20 April 2016



School's Details

Full Name of School/College	Westholme School
DfE Number	889/6000
EYFS Number	EY321259
Registered Charity Number	526615
Address	Westholme School Wilmar Lodge Meins Road Blackburn Lancashire BB2 6QU
Telephone Number	01254 506070
Email Address	principal@westholmeschool.com
Principal	Mrs Lynne Horner
Chair of Governors	Mr Brian Marsden
Age Range	0 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	753
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (232 boys; 521 girls)
Early Years Foundation Stage	83
Pupils' Ability	Standardised tests indicate that the ability of the pupils is above the national average.
Pupils' Needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs is thirty-two. One has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. These pupils require support with dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder, and speech and language difficulties. One pupil has English as an additional language (EAL) but does not receive additional support.
History of the School	The school was founded in 1923, originally as a preparatory school. It became a charitable trust in 1968.
Ownership and Governing Structure	The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.

School's Details

School Structure	The school educates boys and girls from 3 months to 18 years. The Infant School is co-educational; from Year 3 boys and girls are taught separately.
Inspection Dates	19 April 2016 - 20 April 2016
Other Useful Information:	(i) The school operates on three sites within a mile of each other. (ii) No boys are currently in Years 11, 12 or 13.

About the Inspection

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

In the junior school, the school measures attainment using national tests. In the years 2012 to 2014 results were above the national average for maintained schools.

At GCSE in the years 2012 to 2014, performance has been above the average for girls in maintained schools.

In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2012 to 2014 have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupil performance is in place.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1 - 4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6 - 16] and the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17 - 21] are met.

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22 - 31] are met.

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with Education, Health and Care plans or English as an Additional Language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [Paragraph 34] is met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.

Children make good and sometimes better progress in relation to their starting points and are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education. The EYFS setting provides high-quality care and good learning opportunities for the range of children attending. It meets the needs of all children well, including those who have SEND or EAL. As a result, children are extremely comfortable in their environment, presenting themselves as confident and happy individuals. All safeguarding and welfare requirements have been fully met, and staff demonstrate a shared understanding of the importance of keeping children safe. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been suitably met. Systems to monitor and evaluate the setting have been strengthened since the previous inspection; a clear development plan is in place, alongside ongoing self-evaluation in a number of ways. A greater amount of outdoor learning now takes place, with children taking full advantage of the wealth of stimulating activities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.

Governors are aware of their responsibilities and demonstrate a commitment to providing a quality EYFS provision. Leaders of the EYFS are currently in acting roles, prior to a new Head of EYFS starting in September 2016. Nevertheless, leaders and managers at all levels are clear of their roles and oversee the setting effectively on a day to day basis, ensuring that the good standards of provision and high-quality care are maintained and developed. Leaders and managers share a desire for all children to achieve to the best of their ability. A well-established system of staff supervision is in place which helps improve children's experiences. Additionally a new cycle of performance management has been recently introduced, but is yet to be fully implemented. Since the previous inspection the setting has developed the monitoring and evaluation of its practice; leaders and managers know the school well and have an appropriate plan for future development. The relocation of the Nursery to the Infant School site and the subsequent acceptance of babies from three months old has been managed smoothly and efficiently.

Leaders are fully aware of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. They ensure that the curriculum covers not only the requisite areas of learning but embraces additional experiences across the age range; for example Nursery and Pre-School children are taught French through a programme of songs and rhymes, and swimming is available to Pre-School and Reception children. This wide curriculum successfully meets the needs of all children and considers their interests where appropriate. Leaders and managers monitor planning and assessment records to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate. Children consequently receive a good start to their education and are ready for the next stage of their education by the end of the EYFS.

Leaders and managers promote an effective and positive approach to behaviour management, which is followed consistently by staff. This is evident through the well-behaved nature of the children, who are respectful of others' differences. Poor behaviour is rare, and systems in place deal with such incidences at an age-appropriate level. The setting is proactive in quickly identifying differences in progress for children with specific needs, and has implemented effective steps to help narrow any gaps in learning. For example, staff work with parents and external agencies where necessary. Appropriate means are in place to promote British values as well as to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders and managers pay due regard to the arrangements to protect children and have effective systems for safeguarding; they oversee and implement thorough policies and procedures that meet the statutory requirements, including those that promote welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism. Leaders ensure that necessary training is undertaken by staff, such as in paediatric first aid, safeguarding and food

hygiene. An extremely comprehensive induction procedure has recently been introduced which helps ensure that staff are fully prepared for their role.

Parents are highly supportive of the setting, with all who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire voicing their extreme satisfaction with all aspects of the care and education provided. Those spoken to during the inspection were equally complimentary, identifying the fact that staff know children extremely well and fully cater for their individual needs. Strong channels of communication foster a close partnership that is to the benefit of the child.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.

All children are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability by enthusiastic, knowledgeable staff who understand how young children learn. Staff provide relevant and stimulating learning experiences that consider the needs and interests of individuals well. For example older children are provided with a range of challenges that allow them to use their skills in a meaningful way, and the highly resourced role-play area for children aged two was developed with consideration of their expressed interest in hairdressers. Comprehensive ongoing assessment has recently been revised across the EYFS and includes information gathered when children first enter the setting, as well as information from parents and, if relevant, previous providers. This is used to good effect to plan for each child's future learning, and the school has identified that greater analysis of this material would inform their planning further. Prompt action is taken should children fall behind in their learning or require additional support, and as a result they continue to make good progress and achieve well.

Parents are made aware of how children learn by means of workshops and weekly newsletters, through discussion with their children's key person. They are aware of expectations and appreciate the suggestions provided that help them to continue their children's learning at home. Teachers keep parents very well informed about their children's progress and achievements through regular, informative reports which include useful targets for children's future learning. The required progress check at age two and the EYFS profile are shared with parents. Formal parents meetings, daily face-to-face contact, and home-school books provide further means of communication.

A variety of different faiths and backgrounds are represented by the children attending the setting, and a clear sense of respect for this diversity is apparent in both staff and children. Children learn about each other's customs and celebrations, such as by sharing photographs of their experiences and through visits from their families to share their beliefs with the class. Care is taken to ensure that all children are able to access the variety of resources on offer.

Teachers equip children with good learning skills, encouraging them to think critically, explore and question through an interesting range of activities and resources both indoors and out. Children are helped to understand how they learn through 'The Learnosaurs', which explain learning styles at an age-appropriate level. Praise and encouragement is frequent. By the end of the EYFS, children are confident learners ready for the next stage of their education. The outdoor learning environment is used to good effect. In this environment children confidently engage in a range of activities, as was observed when the under twos experimented with mark-making using chalk and investigated the properties of sand, whilst those aged three fully immersed themselves in an activity that required them to solve the problem of how to cross a river infested with piranhas. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children is outstanding. Staff are clearly committed to instilling a positive approach to learning in children. They achieve this extremely well, fostering confidence, self-awareness and a growing understanding of learning strategies. As a result, children display high levels of enjoyment whilst exploring their environment. They use their creativity to enrich their imaginative play, as was observed when children aged three recreated a bear hunt while recalling the key points of a favourite story.

Children's personal development is of a high standard. From an early age children are comfortable in the company of others, and are well supported by staff to acquire the necessary social and emotional skills to ready them for their transition as they move through the setting, to help them contribute to wider society, and to prepare them for life in Britain. Each child has a key person who is chosen carefully to support their emotional, physical and learning needs. Key people build strong relationships with children and their families. This helps children settle into the setting extremely quickly, as was observed when under twos quickly engaged in activities on arrival. Effective partnerships with parents help to develop a shared understanding of the importance of prompt and regular attendance. Children benefit from the clear behavioural guidelines, for instance through the use of a traffic-light system for older children, which they follow well. They demonstrate a growing ability to manage their own feelings, and are respectful of others. Children know who to turn to if they require support.

Children demonstrate a growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For instance, older children are taught the basics of internet security when using technology. Through topic work and discussions, children develop an awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. From an early age they take responsibility for their own needs, as was observed when children aged two decided when to have their snack.

Outcomes for children

The outcomes for children are good. Children make good and sometimes better progress in relation to their different starting points and abilities. Those identified as having SEND or EAL make equally good progress, with the latter often making rapid progress in acquiring the English language. Across the EYFS, most children meet and some surpass the expectations for their age. As a result they are well prepared for their next stage of their education.

The youngest children are keen to communicate; they are curious and experiment with a range of resources, showing an early interest in mark-making and displaying growing physical skills whilst working with others to create a soft brick tower. Those aged two listen carefully to stories and confidently share their news in front of a group. They are developing good pencil control whilst tracing patterns and demonstrate a good awareness of numbers within 20; they were observed whilst they were changing the calendar, understanding that 19 follows 18. The oldest children demonstrate a growing awareness of the sounds that words make, using this confidently to help read and spell words whilst writing independently. They apply their mathematical skills well and demonstrate a secure understanding of addition and subtraction, as was observed when a child independently devised a subtraction problem. Children across the age range demonstrate well-developed personal skills for their age; they are kind to one another and display an appreciation of the value of sharing from an early age.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years.

- Make greater use of assessment information to plan for future learning.
- Expand the recently introduced performance management cycle so that it includes all EYFS teaching staff.

About the inspection

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

Inspectors

Mr Michael Phipps	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Louise Harwood	Accompanying Inspector
Miss Jacqueline Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years
Miss Ann Weitzel	Compliance Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)