



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEHALL SCHOOL

JANUARY 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Whitehall School			
DfE number	873/6015			
Address	117 High Street Somersham Huntingdon Cambs PE28 3EH			
Telephone number	01487 840966			
Email address	office@whitehallschool.com			
Principal	Ms Rebecca Hutley			
Proprietor	Mr Chris Hutley			
Age range	6 months to 11 years			
Number of pupils on roll	90			
	Boys	40	Girls	50
	EYFS	44	Infants	16
	Juniors	30		
Inspection dates	31 January to 01 February 2018			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Whitehall School is a co-educational day school situated in the village of Somersham near Huntingdon, for pupils from the age of 6 months to 11 years. It was opened in 1983 and is owned by the members of one family who are the directors of the school. The site contains the main house, an 18th century coach house, a library, play areas, a field for games and a covered, heated swimming pool. Since the last inspection a new principal has been appointed who is also one of the directors.
- 1.2 It is owned and governed by the directors of Whitehall School Limited.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school provides for younger children from the age of 6 months and the new principal, who is also a director, was appointed in 2015.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to provide a thriving environment where children flourish academically, personally and socially, having the opportunity as individuals to develop strong academic skills and to build self-esteem and confidence in preparation for moving on to secondary school and into life.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, reflecting the local area; most live within a 15 mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 10 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and dyscalculia, who are supported by the SENCO and their class teachers. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). Data used by the school have identified 11 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them within the classroom.

2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

Preface

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. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection 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 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 identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, 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

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school measures attainment using national curriculum tests. In the years 2015 to 2017, the results were above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.3 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 pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relation to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **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

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing 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.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 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.

2.18 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

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding. Children under two make rapid progress in relation to their starting points and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 2.20 Children's well-being is at the heart of the setting and excellent care and planning meets the needs and interests of all the children.
- 2.21 Children are extremely happy and feel safe and secure within their caring and nurturing environment.
- 2.22 Requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met. Staff work as a strong team who share their understanding and responsibilities to protect the children in their care.
- 2.23 EYFS leaders evaluate and reflect on their practice rigorously, ensuring continuous improvement.
- 2.24 Recommendations from the previous inspection have been implemented.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.25 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.26 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding and a strength of the setting. Leaders have high expectations of their pupils and share an ambitious vision. They work together as a conscientious team to provide a happy, caring and safe environment. They successfully track and monitor children's progress to ensure they achieve high standards.
- 2.27 Effective and regular supervision of staff is firmly embedded in practice, enabling and supporting key people to improve their role with both pupils and parents. Since the previous inspection structured programmes for the monitoring of teaching and learning have been fully implemented. A staff induction pack, staff appraisal and peer observations identify appropriate professional development needs which contribute positively to children's learning and development.
- 2.28 Staff continuously work together to self-evaluate and improve their setting and incorporate the views of parents. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were very happy with the start in education their children were experiencing.
- 2.29 Staff have the needs and interests of their children at the forefront of their planning and are skilled at motivating them. They use a system of 'in the moment planning', ensuring that activities for under-twos focus on their individual interests and further their learning. Learning programmes meet all the EYFS learning and development requirements.
- 2.30 Staff plan together to provide an excellent curriculum with a range of exciting experiences focusing on the prime areas of learning. Children's achievements are tracked against the early learning goals and they are prepared extremely well for the next stage in their learning.
- 2.31 Leaders ensure that staff cater for each individual, narrowing any gaps in outcomes. Equality, diversity and British values of respect and tolerance are actively promoted through policies and practice.
- 2.32 Staff are well-trained in child protection and paediatric first aid and understand the procedures to be followed in the event of a concern. Children's safety is of the utmost importance and daily risk assessments are carried out. Staff are aware of how to guard children against extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.33 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

- 2.34 Teaching supports every child, according to their need, any concerns are highlighted and progress is carefully tracked against age-appropriate developmental goals and furthered with next steps for learning.
- 2.35 Staff know their key children very well and share a strong understanding of the EYFS and how it is delivered to under-twos.
- 2.36 Children's needs and interests are at the heart of the setting. Useful assessment information is gathered when children join the setting and parents meet with key people. A regular two-way flow of information with other providers, such as child-minders further informs children's needs and progress.
- 2.37 Staff are experts at using an online program to assess children, and parents greatly appreciate being able to access so much information about their children's daily activities. Progress is carefully tracked and areas identified where children may need extra support. Individual targets are set, enabling children to achieve in those areas. These are discussed with parents and once achieved, signed off by them.
- 2.38 Skilful practitioners know just when to interact with support, encouragement and guidance, when to encourage children to have a go at something new and how to use resources to further stages of development, such as putting favourite toys almost out of reach to encourage a baby to stand. They are experts at modelling language, repeating and reinforcing words and asking questions to further language and thinking skills. Key people know which activity to introduce to further colour recognition and counting skills. Staff use a variety of motivating resources, both indoors and outside in the garden and woodland areas, to provide exciting and challenging experiences, arousing curiosity and imagination and furthering physical development. Children carefully follow their key person's instructions as they learn to operate the CD player. Equally, key people are experts in advising parents in developmental matters, suggesting practical solutions to solve problems. Leaders have identified a need to extend learning experiences in the outdoor areas.
- 2.39 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. They greatly appreciate the communication they have with their child's key person, the daily care diary, the quarterly consultations and the useful and comprehensive 'Progress at Two' report. Parents contribute 'wow moments' when their child achieves something new, such as sitting down at the table, or using a hand-dryer independently. Staff never miss an opportunity to celebrate a child's achievement.
- 2.40 Equality and diversity are promoted through celebrations of different cultures. Children learn to accept other people, through trips and visitors, playing with small world displays and celebrating each other's differences. Staff use positive reinforcement so that children are encouraged to respect one another, share and take turns.
- 2.41 Well-planned teaching supports all children to develop their communication, physical, social and emotional skills, thus enabling them to be ready to move on to the next stage of their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.42 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding.
- 2.43 Staff work as a very successful, positive and united team, creating a nurturing, caring family environment where children are happy and secure, yet confident to explore and take risks.
- 2.44 Adults skilfully provide activities to further learning: children persevered enthusiastically with blowing skills until they were successful in blowing their own bubbles; they carefully used tweezers to move pompoms, thus developing both concentration and motor skills.
- 2.45 Key people encourage children to develop their independence; they choose their toys and activities as well as pudding at lunchtime. They are given baby wipes to wipe their own hands carefully before and after eating. They lead their own learning, happily exploring and using their imagination, as when caring for and feeding their baby dolls.

- 2.46 Children know all the adults within their caring environment and have the opportunity to mix with the over-twos every Friday so transition is a natural step for them.
- 2.47 Children form very secure relationships with their key people and all staff in their setting. Children who are upset are cuddled and comforted by their key person. Staff demonstrate great care towards the children at all times; waking up from their afternoon sleep was a gentle, calm and loving experience.
- 2.48 Attendance is regularly and promptly checked.
- 2.49 Staff have very high expectations of behaviour; they are calm and positive role models who praise and celebrate good behaviour. Key people know when to caution children and carefully explain what could happen when toddlers mop the floor over-enthusiastically.
- 2.50 Staff explain and demonstrate how to keep safe, for example by promoting safe climbing.
- 2.51 Care is taken to ensure that observations are only recorded on school equipment and photographs are not taken without parental permission.
- 2.52 Children enjoy highly nutritious and interesting snacks along with healthy meals, which help them develop an understanding of healthy food and sample new tastes. Opportunities for toddlers to be outside and to exercise are plentiful; they delighted in splashing in muddy puddles, clad in all-in-one suits and 'wellies'.
- 2.53 Children's personal development is a high priority. Children are encouraged to respect one another and are well prepared to contribute to wider society and life in Britain.

Outcomes for children

- 2.54 Outcomes for children are outstanding. All children make rapid progress from their different starting points which are well informed by parents and by the focused observations of key people.
- 2.55 Children are happy, confident and friendly learners who thrive in their home-from-home family community and have developed strong bonds with their carers. They begin to develop and further their language skills by linking words together; they listen well and are able to follow instructions. Some can count to ten when playing with pompoms. They persevere with tasks, they recognise and know their colours. Staff regularly use songs and music to encourage children to actively engage with them and with each other. Children were observed dancing happily together to 'the Lion King' music. At mealtimes they give out drinks independently and feed themselves carefully using a spoon. They begin to understand the need for personal hygiene. They care for each other, for example helping one another to put on their coats. They learn to take turns and share. Their behaviour is exemplary.
- 2.56 Great care is taken by staff to ensure that all children develop the key skills for the next stage in their learning.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendation for further improvement:

- Further develop the outdoor environment to enable a wider range of learning experiences.

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Loraine Cavanagh	Reporting inspector
Mr Andrew Greenway	Compliance team inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Co-ordinating inspector for Early Years