



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Orchard School and Nursery

February 2019



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School's Details

School	Orchard School and Nursery			
DfE number	823/6018			
Early Years registration number	EY350158			
Address	Orchard School Higham Road Barton-le-Clay Bedfordshire MK45 4RB			
Telephone number	01582 882054			
Email address	admin@orchardschool.org.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Anne Burton			
Proprietors	Mrs Anne Burton		Miss Louise Burton	
Age range	0 to 9			
Number of pupils on roll	95			
	Boys	48	Girls	47
	Nursery	19	R & Prep R	22
	Pre-Prep	31	Prep	23
Inspection dates	6 to 7 February 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Orchard School and Nursery is an independent day school, for boys and girls, aged between 0 and 9 years. The school was established in 1991 by the headmistress, who is also the proprietor, along with her daughter.
- 1.2 The school is comprised of a nursery, for children aged from birth to three years which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) registered setting; 'Russets' and Reception, for children aged from three to five years; the pre-preparatory, for pupils aged from five to seven years; and the preparatory, for pupils aged from seven to nine years.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has extended classroom and outdoor facilities. The school has also incorporated the nursery provision on the school site.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to find and nurture the potential of each pupil, encourage them to be the best that they can be, and develop self-motivation, good manners, consideration for others, and a passion for learning. The objective is that, at each stage, pupils will be equipped with suitable skills and self-confidence for the next phase of their lives.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, mostly from white British families living 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. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan (EHC), or a statement of special educational needs (SEND). No pupils have been identified as having SEND. Data used by the school have identified 12 pupils as being the most able in the school's population. The curriculum is modified for them.

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 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 relating 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, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' 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 any 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, 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] is 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 good.
- 2.20 Children make good progress in their learning, relative to their starting points. They are well-supported emotionally during their settling in sessions, and as they move from one stage of learning to the next, ensuring that they feel happy and secure. The learning and care provided by the setting meets the needs of all children who attend. There are currently no children with SEND but practitioners are aware of the need to provide appropriate support if needed.
- 2.21 Children are cared for extremely well and their excellent behaviour is an indicator that they are very secure emotionally. As they interact with others and follow routines, they grow in independence.
- 2.22 Practitioners have a shared understanding of, and responsibility for, the need to protect the children. Practitioners provide and adhere to clear safety routines. The requirements for the safeguarding and welfare of all children are met.
- 2.23 Leadership and management provide high standards of care for all children, and evaluate practice well, enabling improvements to be made. As well as the move of provision for children under three to the same site as that of the older children, since the previous inspection, systems for performance management have been reviewed. All the recommendations from the previous inspection have been met.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.24 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.
- 2.25 Leadership and management have high expectations for all children. Their vision is to provide the very best for children under two, and care provided is of a high standard. Practitioners are supported well, enabling them to fulfil their roles effectively. Regular opportunities to discuss both the children's needs and how to improve practitioners' own understanding are currently being reviewed. However, professional development opportunities for staff to increase their awareness of alternative practice and learning techniques are limited.
- 2.26 Provision and outcomes are regularly evaluated, enabling further development. The views of practitioners, parents and children are valued, and contribute to future improvement. Children's views were listened to when considering a site to develop in the outdoor environment. Curriculum provision and learning programmes meet statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of the children.
- 2.27 The broad and balanced curriculum is well planned and ensures that all children have a good start to their learning. It initially focuses on the three main areas of learning, and extends as children become ready. The success of the comprehensive settling in sessions, which are intended for to preparing children, benefits from effective partnerships with their parents.
- 2.28 Equality and diversity are promoted, ensuring that all children have access to the same provision. Good behaviour is modelled and encouraged by staff, who sensitively challenge any negative behaviour using positive attitudes. Children are recognised and cared for as individuals. British values are promoted, as children are taught to value and care for each other. They have many opportunities to listen to one another and make their own choices. For example, at snack time, children are able to choose songs.

- 2.29 Arrangements to provide a safe environment for all children are appropriate and kept under effective review. A safe handover at the start and end of each session protects children from harm; daily health and safety checks, as well as the implementation of comprehensive policies, ensure all children are safe. Practitioners undertake appropriate safeguarding training. Suitable staff recruitment procedures are in place and all staff are inducted thoroughly. Medicines are kept secure, and their dispensation and any accidents are dutifully recorded with comprehensive procedures in place.
- 2.30 Responses to the inspection questionnaire show that the vast majority of parents believe that the nursery helps their child develop skills for the future, and safeguards their child effectively. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.31 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- 2.32 The diligence shown by practitioners, as they support each child's learning, enables children to achieve well. They encourage children to change their own shoes when going outside, as one way of helping them to be successful and independent learners.
- 2.33 Staff clearly understand the needs and interests of all children, and have a secure understanding of this age group. Children learn well as a result of the way staff communicate with them, use resources appropriately, and pace their activities. Children access opportunities to improve skills, such as climbing and balancing, through the outdoor provision when practicable.
- 2.34 Before a child starts in nursery, parents provide valuable information for practitioners, which enables them to understand each child. Further information is shared during the year, ensuring a strong home and school partnership that enables learning to continue at home. Continuous observations, recorded comprehensively by practitioners, identify the further needs of each child. This information is used to plan learning strategies and a way forward. Staff know the children extremely well, and plans are clearly based on the needs and interests of each child.
- 2.35 Practitioners have an excellent relationship with the children, and encourage them as they learn and develop. Regular verbal praise and the use of stickers help children to understand how to develop and grow in confidence. Daily oral and written feedback enable practitioners to share a child's success with parents. This helps them to understand their child's progress and engage with their learning.
- 2.36 All children have equal access to the curriculum. Older children often support younger ones with, for instance, getting ready to play outside. They value others as they celebrate cultural festivals. However, resources to promote understanding of disabilities and different cultures are limited, which restricts the ability of practitioners to fully promote diversity.
- 2.37 Careful guidance by practitioners enables children to acquire the skills necessary to develop effectively and to be ready to move to the next class at the appropriate time. Excellent transition activities prepare children for this important stage in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.38 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.39 An extremely positive culture is evident, as children take turns and share together. Each child has a strong sense of achievement and feels valued. Staff interact extremely positively with all children. They encourage the children when acquiring new skills, enabling them to grow in self-confidence and in understanding how to be successful learners. Children spontaneously celebrate together when a younger child starts to walk more confidently; they share pride in the accomplishment.

- 2.40 Children enjoy their learning; they become increasingly independent as they try new activities and explore their surroundings. They eagerly join in and show great enthusiasm when happily splashing in muddy puddles. Younger children use their initiative when accessing the dough table, as well as when successfully fitting blocks together without help.
- 2.41 As children become ready to move to the next class, they discuss their feelings and grow in confidence emotionally. They are extremely well prepared socially through excellent transition opportunities, such as when visiting their new classroom.
- 2.42 Children are extremely happy to come to nursery and are greeted enthusiastically by staff. Attendance is prompt and carefully recorded. Parents are contacted if a child is absent. Familiar routines when leaving their main carer and at sleep time ensure that children feel extremely safe, emotionally and physically.
- 2.43 Behaviour is excellent and children carefully follow familiar routines. Children listen well to instructions, enabling them to be independent and respond effectively to the encouragement to use kind hands to care for others. Children are reminded how to play safely and they help tidy up to keep the environment safe. They wash hands before meals and are reminded to walk whilst they are based indoors. These consistent routines enable children to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- 2.44 A healthy lifestyle is promoted as children enjoy milk or water at meal times, along with nutritious lunches. They enjoy playing in the fresh air.
- 2.45 Older children interact extremely well with younger children and help them when needed. They are encouraged to be caring and considerate. They help each other put on their hats and support each other in similar situations. Children understand right from wrong and make their own decisions at snack time. British values are further evident as children follow class rules and include each other in activities. They raise money for those in need, showing their care for the wider community.

Outcomes for children

- 2.46 Outcomes for children are good.
- 2.47 Assessments show that all children make good progress in relation to their starting points. Sometimes, progress is excellent. However, this is not consistent, due to the scope and use of resources in some areas of learning. Most children meet or exceed the level of development that is typical for their age, enabling them to be ready for the next stage in their learning.
- 2.48 Older children show good hand-eye co-ordination when threading beads and printing with different shapes. Younger children develop their co-ordination well as they make marks on paper, bang balls together and push, pull and roll dough. They develop physically as they pull themselves up, balance and thread wooden shapes successfully. During meal times older children use a spoon and fork competently and drink from a cup, whilst younger children use a spoon confidently.
- 2.49 As their language develops, older children communicate effectively and ask simple questions. For example, they can ask where the other chicken has gone. They explain why they don't want to go in the puddles, and they enjoy repeating their favourite songs. Younger children use gestures to make their needs known and understand simple instructions.
- 2.50 When taking appropriate risks in order to succeed, older children walk down steps independently and younger children try new food. Older children seek out others to play with and find a familiar adult to share their excitement with. Younger children move with increasing independence and show an interest in different activities. Older children work out how to scoop water from a puddle into a saucepan effectively, and younger children solve problems successfully as they fit plastic bricks together. Older children observe carefully to see what happens when they splash puddles with a stick and younger children investigate the textures of noodles and rice.

2.51 As their mathematical understanding develops, older children categorise objects according to size, whilst making big and small balls out of dough. They share these saying, 'one for you and one for me'. Older children match and sort coloured balls into the same colour hoops successfully. They enjoy emptying and filling containers with different quantities. Younger children begin to understand daily routines. Examples of these routines include meal and nap time.

Compliance with statutory requirements

2.52 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:

- Increase opportunities for staff professional development to broaden their awareness of alternative practice and learning techniques that enhance children's progress.
- Provide sufficient resources to enable practitioners to fully promote diversity.

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 proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Vaughan Jelley	Reporting inspector
Mrs Tanya Hill	Compliance team inspector (Assistant head, IAPS school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Co-ordinating inspector for early years