

ORCHARD SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Higham Gobion Road, Barton-le-Clay, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK45 4RB

21 MARCH 2017

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Orchard School and Nursery is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of 0 and 9 years. It is located in the village of Barton-le-Clay near Bedford. The school's proprietors are members of the same family, who are also responsible for its leadership and management.

At the time of the visit, there were 88 pupils on roll; 48 boys and 40 girls. Of these, 49 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has identified one pupil with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who receives support for learning. None have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or statement of educational needs. There are 16 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom require support for their English.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an announced visit at the request of the Department for Education to check that the school has fully implemented the action points raised following the ISI integrated inspection in March 2016. The focus of the visit was on the safeguarding of pupils' welfare; the suitability of staff and proprietors; the handling of complaints and the quality of leadership and management.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

Quality of education provided - [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4; EYFS requirements 1.1 to 2.11]

The regulations and requirements are met.

The curriculum is appropriately structured for both children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and older pupils, and ensures that all age groups have opportunity to learn and make progress. In the EYFS, activities inside and outside are well planned and encourage exploration and investigative learning. Staff are suitably experienced and knowledgeable about supporting children's learning and development needs. They work effectively with parents to ensure continuity of learning between home and school.

For older pupils, staff prepare and deliver lessons that stimulate pupils' interest and motivation to learn. During discussions, pupils commented that teaching staff are always supportive and that they enjoy their learning immensely. A suitable range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' learning experiences beyond the classroom. Suitable assessment processes ensure pupils' attainment is carefully tracked to ensure their continuing good progress. In the EYFS, the progress check for children aged two years ensures that children's emerging needs are appropriately supported, including support from external specialists if required. Older pupils and children in the EYFS behave well and respond promptly to the high expectations set by staff. Throughout the school, resources are of good quality, appropriate for respective age-ranges, and support learning well.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

The school meets the regulation.

A suitable personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) programme ensures that pupils, including children in the EYFS, receive suitable guidance to support their personal development needs. There is a strong focus on the promotion of British values throughout the school, encouraging respect, tolerance and empathy towards the needs of others. This was evidenced by the positive interactions observed in lessons, between pupils and between staff and pupils, including children in the EYFS. During discussions, pupils confirmed their understanding that rules are necessary to ensure equality and fairness within society. Visitors to the school, such those with disabilities, and trips to religious venues engender pupils' understanding of differing cultures and the needs of our diverse world. Pupils develop age-appropriate democratic knowledge through classroom debates and school council membership elections.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); EYFS requirement 3.4 – 3.8]

The school meets the regulation and requirements.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and has regard to the latest government guidance.

Safeguarding arrangements are correctly implemented and provide appropriate support for pupils' needs. All staff, including those who are regular visitors to the school, have received training in recent changes to regulatory guidance and on-line safety. New staff receive comprehensive induction training to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including the staff code of conduct. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy (DDSL) are both members of the senior leadership team, and have appropriate levels of training for their roles, which is in line with local procedures. The DDSL is the designated EYFS safeguarding lead and has appropriate knowledge about ensuring the welfare and well-being of young children. The DSL regularly circulates informal updates on any changes to safeguarding policy and its implementation and provides opportunity for staff to contribute to safeguarding arrangements. During discussions, staff demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They recognise the importance of 'early help' strategies and know how to report any concerns about pupils or other staff, and state that they know to report any concerns about senior leaders directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Alternatively, they can report an allegation to an externally designated safeguarding lead who the school has identified to support staff, given the proprietorial leadership and governance of the school. Staff acknowledge the importance of disclosing any required changes in personal circumstance to the senior leadership and state that use of personal mobile phones and cameras is not permitted whilst pupils are present in school. Appropriate records for safeguarding concerns are kept, and are regularly monitored by the DSL. These show timely and appropriate liaison with both parents, when appropriate, and with local agencies. Discrepancies relating to safeguarding identified at the previous inspection have been appropriately addressed. All necessary recruitment checks, relating to barred list checks for staff with delayed DBS checks or those with transferable DBS disclosures from other organisations, medical checks, references and prohibition from teaching checks are undertaken in a timely manner before staff begin work at the school. The proprietors undertake an annual safeguarding review with due diligence, demonstrating rigour in their oversight of arrangements. Pupils, during discussions, comment that they are aware of safeguarding arrangements in school, including on-line safety; they articulate that they feel equally treated and that staff are very approachable, should they have a concern or worry.

The Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18 to 21; EYFS requirements 3.9-3.13]

The school meets the regulations and requirements.

The school implements the correct procedures for the recruitment of all new staff, supply staff, volunteers and proprietors before they begin work at the school. The process is correctly documented in the recruitment policy. Staff files are well maintained and contain all the required information, which is cross-referenced on a checklist within each file. The procedures for recording checks on the single central register of appointments (SCRA) have been revised and now demonstrate the accurate recording of staff recruitment checks. Senior leaders regularly monitor safer recruitment procedures, which including checking the SCRA. All omissions identified at the previous inspection have been rectified where needed.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 22- 29; EYFS requirements 3.57 – 3.63]

The school meets the regulations and requirements.

The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure that the premises provide suitable accommodation for the changes in age-groups and, in particular the youngest children in the EYFS, through changing existing facilities and building new learning areas. All accommodation and facilities are appropriately heated, lit, ventilated and clean. Classroom areas are suitably sized, have good acoustics to promote learning and are well organised to accommodate the numbers of pupils within each year group. Toilet and washing facilities are plentiful around the school and are appropriate for both the ages and needs of pupils, including children in the EYFS. All areas of the school are maintained in a good state of repair and regularly monitored for safety; any maintenance issues are promptly rectified. Medical facilities are appropriate. Dining facilities and food preparation areas are suitable. Pupils have easy access to drinking water and water supplies are appropriate. External areas are spacious, enabling provision for pupils' physical education and outdoor play and are suitable for all ages of pupils. External lighting ensures all areas are appropriately lit. During discussions, pupils comment that they feel safe and greatly enjoy the spacious accommodation, particularly the outside areas.

Provision of information to parents [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32 (1) (c)]

The school meets the regulation.

The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

The manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; EYFS requirements 3.74 – 3.75]

The school meets the regulations and requirements.

Any complaints are correctly handled in line with regulatory guidance and the school's published procedures. Appropriate procedures are in place to record all formal complaints, which include the stage of resolution and action taken by the school, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld. All related documentation is securely stored and kept confidential, except if requested by official bodies. The proprietors regularly monitor the effectiveness of the procedures.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

The school meets the regulation.

The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. All discrepancies identified at the previous inspection have been appropriately rectified. Proprietorial review is thorough to ensure that policies are effectively implemented in practice and actively promote the well-being of all pupils.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school meets all of the relevant requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.