



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

AMESBURY SCHOOL

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Amesbury School

Full Name of School	Amesbury School
DfE Number	936/6052
EYFS Number	EY343568
Registered Charity Number	312058
Address	Amesbury School Hazel Grove Hindhead Surrey GU26 6BL
Telephone Number	01428 604322
Fax Number	01428 607715
Email Address	l.wright@amesburyschool.co.uk
Head	Mr Nigel Taylor
Chair of Governors	Mr Tarquin Henderson
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	323
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (190 boys; 133 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 15 5-11: 207 3-5 (EYFS): 48 11-13: 53
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Elaine Starling
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	01 Oct 2014 to 02 Oct 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection occurs over a period of two continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in September 2011.

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. 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 31 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 Education (DfE) 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.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Anne McConway	Early Years Lead Inspector
Ms Angela Beck	Team Inspector for Early Years (Early Years Co-ordinator, Society of Heads school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 SUMMARY	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	3
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	4
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	4
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	5

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Amesbury is a non-selective co-educational preparatory day school for pupils between the ages of two and thirteen, situated on a 34-acre site in the Surrey countryside. The school opened in 1870 and is established as a charitable trust administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school's aims are for all pupils to enjoy their time at school, to feel valued as individuals, where their talents prosper to the benefit of the community, and to leave with their confidence high, skills sharpened and personalities rounded. It also seeks to develop in all pupils the necessary skills, aptitudes and abilities to enable them to move on as emotionally resilient, autonomous learners. It sets out to encourage in pupils commitment, courtesy, co-operation, tolerance and compassion towards one another, and to promote a close relationship between home and school. Amesbury has a Christian foundation.
- 1.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is housed in a single-storey building comprising Nursery and Reception rooms. The older and younger Nursery classes both have direct access to a separate outdoor play area. The two Reception classes have access to an outdoor area via both ramp and steps. All classrooms have easy access to toilet facilities. The EYFS children make full use of the school facilities, such as the library, sports hall and chapel.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, changes have been made to the reporting and recording of observations of learning and development, reallocation of classrooms has taken place, a garden for the children under the age of three has been built and the library has been refurbished.
- 1.5 The EYFS caters for 63 children aged from 2 to 5 years, of whom 24 attend full-time and 39 attend on a part-time basis. The school welcomes children from all backgrounds and abilities. Children come predominantly from professional families living within a 20-mile radius. The majority of children are from a white British background and none have English as an additional language. The school has identified two pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), both of whom receive support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Pre-Nursery	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Nursery	Nursery (3 to 4 years)
Reception	Reception

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with statutory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. Ensure that policies are updated regularly to meet current requirements.
 2. Maintain current versions of policies on the school website.
 3. Ensure that knowledge of the current EYFS Framework by staff is sufficient to enable its efficient implementation.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 3.1 The setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. The educational programmes cover all seven areas of learning and provide a range of interesting activities to ensure that children reach or exceed the levels of development expected for their age. Children under the age of three are well supported in acquiring skills in communication and language and in their physical, personal, social and emotional development, so that they have a secure foundation from which to make good progress in their future learning. Those over three make good progress in learning phonics, cursive handwriting, accurate counting, addition of digits, and a range of skills in expressive arts and design.
- 3.2 Staff are successful in identifying and supporting the learning and development of all the children, including those with SEND. Adults make effective use of the prior knowledge and skills of the children as the starting point for setting targets for future learning. Staff provide sufficient challenge in all activities to extend the learning of the more able. Children in Reception have school lunch in the dining room and learn from an interactive whiteboard, which help to prepare them for transition to Year 1. Staff observe children and record their interests and achievement to underpin planning, but assessment is inconsistent between classes. Adults have high expectations and motivate children to complete tasks to the best of their ability. The staff are enthusiastic about their work and this inspires the children to actively participate in the wide-ranging learning activities.
- 3.3 The quality of teaching is good and staff promote attentive listening skills so that children make the most of learning opportunities. Staff support all the children well to acquire the skills to develop and learn effectively through an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning activities. They make good use of clearly defined areas of learning, a nurturing environment, a wide range of learning styles and clear routines. Children ask questions and engage in discussion through the use of open-ended questions, thus enabling them to develop thinking skills in readiness for the next stage in their learning. Behaviour is good and children use their freedom to make choices, and they clear away independently to participate in adult-led activities.
- 3.4 Parents are effectively engaged in helping to settle their children in the setting. Staff know the children well and this enables them to have effective communication with parents about their children's progress to provide appropriate support regarding their learning and development.

3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 3.5 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is good. A key person system operates which enables the children to form secure bonds and emotional attachments at the start of their time in the setting, which promotes their well-being.
- 3.6 Staff enjoy their work and provide good role models for the children when offering guidance on appropriate behaviour. Children under three are happy to follow simple rules of hygiene and help to tidy away resources, thus ensuring an orderly environment. Occasionally, children over three are expected to sit for too long in an adult-led session and they become restless. Good teamwork and effective deployment of staff enable the teaching of independent skills to children using a wide range of high quality resources. Excellent relationships at all levels promote respect and tolerance of difference. Children are developing a managed understanding of risk in exploring their environment, with activities ranging from construction with wood blocks indoors to tricycles outdoors. They readily talk to adults and are confident that they will receive help, so they feel safe and secure. The children play happily, imaginatively and co-operatively together during self-chosen activities.
- 3.7 Children are encouraged to manage their own personal hygiene independently to ensure that they understand the importance of hand washing before eating lunch. Drinking water is accessible at all times, and nutritious, appetising food is cooked on the school premises. Children are learning that healthy eating and physical exercise contribute to their well-being. Staff are skilled in ensuring effective transition within and from the EYFS, thus promoting children's emotional well-being. After-school and holiday care provision is on offer to all children in the EYFS, with staff known to them, thus providing continuity of care and a nutritious cooked meal four days a week.

3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 3.8 The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Governors have recently become actively involved in monitoring the setting, reviewing the policies and visiting regularly, seeking to acquire a deeper knowledge of the EYFS. Staff do not always show a sufficiently detailed understanding of the EYFS Framework. The setting meets all the learning and development requirements of the EYFS and achievement is regularly shared with parents. Staff identify learning priorities, including during the progress check of children at the age of two, and share them with parents to indicate how their children may be supported at home.
- 3.9 Analysis of the evidence prior to the inspection indicated that the school has not always been rigorous in ensuring that it keeps up to date with the most recent regulatory requirements. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken suitable steps to ensure that identified shortcomings in policies had been rectified, and all arrangements now comply with requirements for safeguarding and welfare. Policies which had been reviewed had not been placed on the website but this has now been rectified. Effective staff checks and risk assessments are implemented effectively to ensure that children are safeguarded and supported well.
- 3.10 Regular self-evaluation through a quality assurance scheme provides a continuous review of practice in which targets are set for improvement. Provision is made for

the professional supervision of staff to enable them to discuss their concerns with senior colleagues, but arrangements are unstructured and irregular at present. Effective systems are in place for performance management, and staff have undertaken training in food hygiene, first aid and child protection to ensure the safety of the children. The recommendations of the previous inspection have been fully met. The partnership with parents is productive, and contact with external agencies is well established to secure appropriate interventions in order to support the needs of children, when required. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire praised the setting and its work, and in discussion they spoke positively about the volume of useful information provided by the school, the nurturing environment, the accessibility of staff for daily communication and the depth of staff's knowledge about each individual in their care.

3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.11 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are good. Most children make good progress relative to their starting points. Children under three years of age are learning good physical skills, for example, throwing and kicking footballs and participating in action rhymes and songs. Children aged three to five years are learning to use their phonic knowledge to read and write simple words. In Reception, children learn about how to grow vegetables and flowers, from their beginnings as seeds to handling the fully grown produce. They count reliably to ten and add single-digit numbers. By the end of Reception most children reach the expected level of development and some exceed this in literacy.
- 3.12 The provision for learning and care is good and meets the needs of all children well, including those with SEND and the more able. The children are learning appropriate independent skills in dressing, for example, in preparation for outdoor play, toileting and carrying snacks to the table. Teaching is planned on the basis of prior achievement and observation, and teachers judge its impact from the evaluation of clear targets. Good teamwork amongst staff, together with secure partnerships with parents, ensures that each child's needs are recognised and met.
- 3.13 The children's personal and emotional development is good and in some cases outstanding. They feel safe, secure and happy, enabling them to make progress and be ready for the next stage of their learning.
- 3.14 All the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare were met by the end of the inspection. Staff have a shared understanding of their responsibilities to protect children and report safeguarding concerns.
- 3.15 Recent self-evaluation enhances the school's capacity for continued improvement, for the benefit of the children. Since the previous inspection the outdoor area for Reception and children under three has been developed and safer recruitment practices adopted.