



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BALLARD SCHOOL

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ballard School

Full Name of School	Ballard School
DfE Number	850/6012
EYFS Number	EY311188
Registered Charity Number	307328
Address	Ballard School Fernhill Lane New Milton Hampshire BH25 5SU
Telephone Number	01425 611153
Fax Number	01425 622099
Email Address	admissions@ballardschool.co.uk
Head	Mr Alastair Reid
Chair of Governors	Mr Chris Ford
Age Range	1 to 16
Total Number of Pupils	479
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (265 boys; 214 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 31 5-11: 117 3-5 (EYFS): 49 11-18: 282
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Joanna Edwards
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	18 Nov 2014 to 19 Nov 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 October 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 a governors' representative and attended registration sessions. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Angela Russell Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Elizabeth Crawley Team Inspector for Early Years (Former Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ballard School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from 12 months to 16 years. The school is an educational charitable trust, whose trustees form the board of governors. The school aims to help each individual pupil reach their potential within a secure, caring, holistic community espousing Christian values.
- 1.2 The present school is an amalgamation of several schools, the earliest of which was founded in 1895. It is situated in extensive grounds on the southern edge of the New Forest. Its original country house, with its own chapel, is at the centre of a complex of modern classrooms and specialist buildings. There is a range of social backgrounds amongst the pupils, reflecting the diversity of the local community.
- 1.3 The school comprises a Senior School, Upper Prep, Lower Prep and Pre-Prep. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children from the ages of twelve months to five years, is part of the Pre-Prep Department, which has its own outdoor play areas.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, there have been many positive changes made to the outdoor play areas for the EYFS children.
- 1.5 There are currently 479 pupils on the school roll, 265 boys and 214 girls. Of these, 117 pupils are aged 5 to 11 and 282 aged 11 to 16. Eighty pupils are in the EYFS, of whom 31 are under three years of age. When children join the Reception class at the age of four, attendance can be on a full or part-time basis.
- 1.6 The school has identified four children in the EYFS as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are six pupils in the EYFS who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.7 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 National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (ages 1 to 2)
Kindergarten	Nursery (ages 2 to 4)
Reception	Reception (ages 4 to 5)

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 In addition to the above action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. Provide further opportunities for children to take part in problem solving activities.
 2. Ensure that there is clear communication between senior managers, and governors, so that changes required by new regulations are made promptly.

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 outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. A wide variety of engaging tasks, along with excellent resources, provide many opportunities for all children, including those with SEND and EAL, as well as the more able, to reach and at times exceed the level of development typical for their age. There are no extra-curricular activities for children in the EYFS, although specialist teaching for physical education (PE), music and dance provides added breadth.
- 3.2 Staff know well each child's unique needs and provide excellent support, enabling all children to be ready for the next stages in their learning. Children under the age of three have many opportunities to develop their physical skills when using the outdoor climbing apparatus. Adults provide high quality reading to children to encourage their listening skills and regularly engage children in meaningful conversation. For children over the age of three, a wide range of excellent activities provides opportunities for exploration, for example when looking for shapes in the outdoor environment. Children have outstanding opportunities during PE lessons to develop their skills, and to take risks to succeed. In order to learn about the wider world they visit a local science centre and Portsmouth historical dockyard.
- 3.3 Teaching is at least good and at times outstanding. Staff take children's needs and interests into account, enabling them to make outstanding progress. Adults have excellent relationships with the children, they have high expectations and skilfully motivate children to learn. However, opportunities for children to fully engage in problem-solving activities are limited at times.
- 3.4 The outstanding partnership with parents provides strong links. Regular parents' meetings and termly written reports provide excellent information about a child's progress. Children bring in special items from home and parents share information about their child's interests with the setting. They find out about their child's day at home time and Nursery parents receive individual lunch letters detailing what their child has eaten. The parents' association and the class parent representative also strengthen this excellent relationship.
- 3.5 In discussions with inspectors, parents were extremely positive in their praise of the school and were particularly appreciative of the strong transition procedures. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire the overwhelming majority of parents expressed a high level of satisfaction. They especially appreciated the fact that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and that their children feel safe and happy.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of the provision to the children's well-being is outstanding. Staff help all children to settle well, ensuring that they are extremely happy and emotionally secure. Children form very strong bonds with adults as a result of the excellent support they receive. Children's independence is encouraged when they select their own resources and tidy away. Behaviour is excellent and enables highly effective learning.
- 3.7 Adults know all children under three extremely well and provide excellent support for each child. Nursery children are commended for their good behaviour, encouraging them to do well. Opportunities are provided for independence during snack time when children get out their bibs, tidy away their cups and recycle their paper plates.
- 3.8 Children over three are encouraged as they explore their surroundings. During celebration assemblies they are valued when Worker of the Week and Pre-Prep Citizen of the Week certificates are awarded. Children also receive special Head Master tokens for achievement.
- 3.9 Good manners are given a high priority and children wash hands before and after snack and other activities. They are taught about healthy eating and become increasingly independent with regard to personal hygiene and self-care. They are encouraged sensitively when they dress after PE lessons. Children are helped to understand the changes in their bodies during exercise and are taught to warm up and cool down. Strong induction procedures enable children to feel safe and cared for. Excellent links between Nursery and Reception, and between Reception and Year 1, ensure smooth transitions.

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

- 3.10 Leadership and management in the EYFS are good. The governors provide good support and are actively involved in the life of the setting. Those staff with management responsibilities for, and within, the EYFS provides excellent oversight of the educational programmes. They monitor teaching and evaluate provision very effectively. While the most recent changes to welfare and safeguarding regulations have been implemented, senior management and governors have not always responded to them in a timely manner. The school meets its aim to help each individual pupil reach their potential within a secure, caring, holistic community espousing Christian values.
- 3.11 Induction for new staff is comprehensive and, for almost all staff in school, recruitment procedures follow all necessary requirements. However, some delays were noted in respect of a recently required check for some staff. The delays were not of the school's making and were fully resolved before the end of the inspection alongside required updating of the single central register. Regular risk assessments and detailed policies ensure that children are well safeguarded. Their implementation is monitored to ensure that they are known by all staff. The comprehensive development plan has realistic targets for improvement and results from a shared vision and accurate self-evaluation.
- 3.12 Performance management and staff supervision meetings support the well-qualified staff in their teaching and care of the children. Further staff training needs are identified, often following appraisal. This has a positive impact on the learning and

development of the children. For example, as a result of attending a training course about positive approaches to different behaviours, practitioners are able to better understand how to help children who face challenges in the classroom. Training in safeguarding, child protection, first aid and health and safety is up-to-date.

- 3.13 Partnerships with the local authority, contact with other outside agencies and excellent partnerships with parents ensure that children with additional needs receive the support they need.

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

- 3.14 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. All children, including those with SEND and EAL, as well as the more able, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Children under three are able to increasingly confidently communicate with others and respond well to instructions. The use of computers to colour and match helps them to develop skills for the future. Excellent progress is made by children in their physical skills when using paintbrushes and pencils.
- 3.15 The achievements for children over three are excellent. They listen with increased concentration and become confident communicators. Children in Reception use their excellent knowledge of the sounds that letters make to read and write simple words. Their mathematical understanding, for example when adding one and two more with numbers up to 20, is used very well in music lessons and registration. Children apply their creative thinking skills when building rockets out of found-materials and increase their dexterity when using scissors.
- 3.16 Children develop a respect for other cultures when they learn about Chinese New Year and learn how to care for others by raising money for charities. All children respond extremely well to clear guidelines and play well together, learn to share and take turns. Their obvious happiness and enjoyment, as well as their excellent behaviour and high levels of co-operation, show that they feel safe. Adults are extremely diligent in ensuring that children are always well supervised and they have a shared understanding of how to protect children. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Highly effective self-evaluation of the setting's practices secures continuous improvement.
- 3.17 As a response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, improvements have been made to the outdoor environment for the youngest children and the school is continually looking for ways to further develop the outdoors for all EYFS children.