



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

HIGHFIELD PRIORY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Highfield Priory School

Full Name of School	Highfield Priory School
DfE Number	888/6009
EYFS Number	EY312963
Registered Charity Number	532262
Address	Highfield Priory School Fulwood Row Fulwood Preston Lancashire PR2 5RW
Telephone Number	01772 709624
Email Address	schooloffice@highfieldpriory.co.uk
Head	Mr Jeremy Duke
Chair of Governors	Mr David Preston
Age Range	6 months to 11
Total Number of Pupils	266
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (140 boys; 126 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-3 (EYFS): 71 5-11: 146 3-5 (EYFS): 49
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Alison Halstead
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	30 Apr 2013 to 01 May 2013

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 May and June 2010.

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 governor, 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

Valerie Craven

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Felicity Taylor

Team Inspector for Early Years

(Head of Junior School, GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Highfield Priory School is a registered charity which is administered by the trustees who make up the board of governors, the majority of whom are current parents. The governors' aim is to provide an environment in which each child develops their talents and aspirations and achieves their full potential. The core values that are the basis of the school's aims are tolerance of others' beliefs and opinions, and an open and honest approach in all that is done. On a daily basis, the school aims to provide a high quality education tailored to individual need.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1938 as a co-educational preparatory school. Following expansion it located to its present eight-acre site, two miles from Preston, in 1970. In 1973, a parents' consortium purchased the school and established it as an educational trust and limited company. In 1990, provision was extended to cater for boys and girls from two years of age, and in 2010 to cater for children from the age of six months. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children are based in their own accommodation within the newer part of the school.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, provision for performing arts has improved with a new facility, French is now being taught in Pre-School and Reception and the range of extra-curricular activities has grown significantly. Provision for the EYFS, in particular the facilities for Nursery children, has been refurbished and outdoor resources for all EYFS children have increased significantly.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 266 pupils on roll, of whom 140 were boys and 126 girls. The EYFS consisted of 120 children, comprising 51 boys and 69 girls. Of these, 42 attended full-time and 78 part-time. The pupils are mainly from Preston and the surrounding areas. Most are from professional and business families and they represent a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures. One EYFS child has a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and 28 have English as an additional language (EAL); however all are fluent in English. In the remainder of the school, two pupils have English as an additional language and 23 have been identified as requiring support with aspects of their learning.
- 1.5 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 tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Babies	Nursery (6 months to 2 years)
Nursery	Nursery (2-3 years)
Pre-School	Nursery (3-4 years)
Reception	Reception (4-5 years)

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) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Explore further ways of utilising the staff's expertise to enhance the overall EYFS provision.

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. The educational programmes provided for the Babies, Nursery, Pre-School and Reception classes are excellent and very wide ranging, covering all of the areas of learning and enabling all children to reach their full potential. This strong provision includes children who have been identified as having special educational needs or disabilities and those with statements, and children who have EAL, as well as those who are gifted and talented. Very caring and supportive staff have successfully created a homely environment where children can achieve well, in line with the school's values and ethos, and develop their skills effectively. Planning is evaluated very effectively, including details of children's individual next steps, ensuring that assessments are robust in identifying and meeting needs. The required assessment checks for two-year-olds are completed and shared with parents and carers.
- 3.2 Staff provide high quality exploration and investigation experiences, particularly for the Babies and Nursery, during sensory and outdoor play activities. Older children have the opportunity to develop their language skills in French. Staff make learning very stimulating and enjoyable, as observed in Reception during a problem-solving activity, where children were 'buying objects' using a range of coins. All children respond very well to the staff's high expectations of them, and as a result they are very enthusiastic and motivated learners. Staff have established excellent partnership links with children's parents and carers, as seen in the overall positive responses to the pre-inspection parent questionnaire. Parents mention that staff are very welcoming and show a high level of respect towards them. Parents are invited to be involved in activities and staff are available to discuss achievements and progress on a daily basis as well as giving guidance within progress reports. This is contrary to a small minority of responses to the questionnaire which suggested that they do not receive timely responses to their questions or enough information about their children's progress.

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

- 3.3 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is outstanding. Key people are very caring and supportive particularly of the youngest children, and work closely with all children's parents and carers to ensure that smooth transitions take place, for example from Pre-School to Reception and from Reception to Year 1 within the school. Parents comment about how staff have supported and reassured them during this time. As part of the overall transition process, Year 1 staff work closely with Pre-School and Reception children, for example during practical baking sessions, enabling children to become familiar with other staff in the school. Key people have established excellent relationships with children, which have a positive impact on meeting their educational and welfare needs. Children feel very secure, are able to explore their surroundings, and can investigate with confidence. School meals, prepared from fresh ingredients, and the use of the school's facilities, such as the sports hall, dance and drama room, all help to raise children's awareness of the need for a healthy diet and physical exercise. The Nursery, Pre-School and

Reception children are learning about the importance of washing their hands after going to the toilet and before meals.

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

- 3.4 Leadership and management are outstanding. Governors and the head are involved effectively in the work of the EYFS and this has had an excellent impact on the overall provision, particularly in the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures. These promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere in which children thrive. The children's well-being and safeguarding are central to all that the school does and are enhanced by thorough risk assessments and a genuine concern for the welfare and personal development of children. Staff oversee and monitor carefully the educational programmes.
- 3.5 Excellent partnerships have been established with children and their parents, and with external agencies including therapists, all contributing significantly to children's achievements and responding to their individual needs. Suitable staff appraisals are completed on a regular basis, focusing on key strengths and areas for development, and are used very effectively to identify professional training needs. The head and senior early years' practitioners believe, through self-evaluation, that they have not yet utilised the staff's expertise to maximum effect to enhance still further the overall EYFS provision. Aspirations are very high and there is a clear vision that is communicated well by the head and the EYFS leadership, enabling staff to share outstanding practice within the school. Very effective teamwork contributes greatly to the progress and development of all children.

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

- 3.6 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. Children's achievements and progress exceed age-related expectations in all areas of learning in relation to their various starting points. Physical development is promoted well for the Babies, as they crawl and explore their immediate environment. The Nursery and Pre-School children are developing advanced speaking and listening skills, for example during story times as they predict what is going to happen next. Reception children are learning about letter sounds during reading and writing activities, and can write simple sentences with a high degree of accuracy. These skills are further enhanced through daily reading practice at home. They are also able to write, understand and manipulate basic numbers through addition and subtraction. All of the children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered well through their interactions with very caring and supportive staff.
- 3.7 Children are learning skills for the future, by operating a range of information and communication technology equipment, for example in Reception, when using a tape recorder to listen to their favourite stories. The learning and care provided by key people is inclusive, ensuring that all of the children's needs are identified and met, highlighted well through staff's comprehensive planning. Children display exemplary behaviour, are courteous and respectful towards each other, visitors and staff, and know how to stay safe. They take delight in receiving praise and many rewards for their behaviour and work. Inspirational leadership and management help to ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Since the previous inspection, the setting has responded well to the recommendation to further develop the outdoor provision.