



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HOWE GREEN HOUSE**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Howe Green House

Full Name of School	<b>Howe Green House</b>
DfE Number	<b>881/6038</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY286469</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>297106</b>
Address	<b>Howe Green House Howe Green Great Hallingbury Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM22 7UF</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01279 657706</b>
Fax Number	<b>01279 501333</b>
Email Address	<b>info@howegreenhouseschool.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Deborah Mills</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Kirsten Barber</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>168</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (82 boys; 86 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 16    5-11: 115 3-5 (EYFS): 37</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Beverley McNally</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>23 Sep 2014 to 24 Sep 2014</b>

## 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 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**

Mr Chris Manville	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Angela Culley	Team Inspector for Early Years (Head, ISA school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Howe Green House School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from two to eleven. Founded in 1987 as an educational trust, the school is administered by a board of governors, providing a wide range of professional experience. The current head took up her post in September 2014.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide children with the opportunities to achieve their potential within a family environment where they feel valued, fulfilled, confident and emotionally literate, becoming caring and responsible citizens who, in the fullness of time, will make the world a better place.
- 1.3 Located on the edge of Hatfield Forest, two and a half miles from the centre of Bishop's Stortford, the school is set in grounds of approximately 15 acres. In March 2013 a new purpose-built junior facility, called the Cedar Wall Building, opened, with the former junior classrooms redeveloped to provide a larger suite for information and communication technology (ICT) and a library. The accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), comprising the Nursery and Reception classroom, is adjacent to the main building. An outdoor classroom is located within the grounds.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 168 (86 girls and 82 boys). Of these, 53 were in the EYFS. Pupils are drawn mainly from Bishop's Stortford and from the surrounding villages.
- 1.5 Within the EYFS the school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two children have English as an additional language (EAL) and receive additional support.
- 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 National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Kindergarten	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) Recommendation for further improvement**

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Develop systems to identify the very best practice within the setting, and through links with other professionals, to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the already high quality 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 to meet the needs of the range of children who attend. Well-planned and extensively resourced classrooms and outdoor areas provide a highly stimulating environment in which children are able to play, explore and create. Well-qualified, knowledgeable staff support and challenge children in equal measure, ensuring that all children receive a balanced curriculum appropriate to their stage of development and needs.
- 3.2 Staff demonstrate high expectations for both academic and personal development, motivating children through a 'can do' attitude. As a result, all children, including those with SEND or EAL, make excellent progress, reaching and often exceeding the expected levels of development typical for their age.
- 3.3 Careful planning enables children to engage actively with high quality, plentiful learning resources. As a result, they develop as effective learners. The balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities is well managed, and planning frequently reflects children's individual interests. Children under the age of three have many opportunities to engage in open-ended activities, and in Reception, children participate in mind-mapping sessions to identify areas of investigation at the beginning of new themes. Careful consideration is given to supporting children with EAL to support the development of English whilst recognising and valuing their home language.
- 3.4 Partnership with parents, based on a genuine 'open-door' policy, is a significant strength of the setting. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in conversation with inspectors, parents were unanimously satisfied with all aspects of the provision, with many expressing high praise for the school's support of their children.
- 3.5 Parents are kept fully informed of children's progress through highly informative and attractively presented learning journals, to which they are also invited to contribute. Formal consultations and written reports provide further information on progress and are highly valued by parents.

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

- 3.6 The setting makes an outstanding contribution to children's well-being. An exemplary key person system, delivered in an environment of mutual trust and respect, results in secure emotional attachments between children and adults. Staff work closely with parents to support children, particularly those under the age of three, through the settling-in period.
- 3.7 Children enjoy coming to school, and respond positively to the high expectations of good behaviour, consideration and co-operation. The effective use of free flow between the indoor and outdoor areas encourages exploration and independence. Excellent role-play areas, open-ended creative resources, and access to specialist teaching in art, music and physical education (PE), encourage children to use their imaginations and express their ideas through a wide range of media.



- 3.8 Children are reminded regularly about personal hygiene, for example when they are introduced to hand washing and other classroom routines through songs and jingles. Weekly games, PE and dance sessions promote a positive attitude to physical exercise, and healthy eating is actively promoted through classroom activities such as making fruit salad, and the appetising, freshly cooked lunches. For children who bring a packed lunch from home, staff discuss appropriate healthy foods with parents.
- 3.9 Children are familiar with staff from other classrooms and there are many opportunities for children to mix across age groups. As a result, children, including the oldest, are well prepared for transitions, quickly adapting to their new surroundings. Year 6 'buddies' further reinforce links across the school and weekly singing assemblies help EYFS children to feel part of the wider school community.

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

- 3.10 The leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. Governors have a very secure knowledge and understanding of their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare and education within the setting. The board maintains close oversight of the EYFS provision, executing its safeguarding responsibilities rigorously and consistently. Following the appointment of the new head, the senior management team has developed a very strong working relationship in a considerably short period. Stringent recruitment procedures ensure the suitability of staff, and safeguarding training is updated at appropriate intervals.
- 3.11 Detailed risk assessments are carried out and recorded, and staff are diligent in identifying, removing and rectifying potential hazards, promoting a safe, secure and welcoming environment. High staffing ratios and thoughtful deployment ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times.
- 3.12 Senior managers monitor and evaluate the quality of the educational provision through careful analysis of EYFS profile scores, resulting in improvements, for example to mathematics and ICT provision. Reflective self-evaluation involves all staff, and results in a detailed development plan, which is under review following the arrival of the new head. There are effective systems for the supervision of staff, who are well supported in their roles. Induction for new staff is comprehensive, and continued professional development actively promoted through biannual appraisals, with several staff gaining further qualifications since joining the school. These arrangements have a positive impact upon learning.
- 3.13 Parents are extremely happy with the way the school is run. Minor concerns are dealt with promptly and to parents' satisfaction, without recourse to the formal complaints procedure. Highly productive relationships between staff, parents and external agencies secure appropriate interventions for those children in need of additional support.

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

- 3.14 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are outstanding. The entire setting pervades a sense of purpose, warmth and well-being for children, staff and parents.
- 3.15 Children make excellent progress in relation to their ability and needs. Progress checks at the age of two indicate that children, including those with SEND or EAL, are achieving well, and that most exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the EYFS. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.16 Throughout the setting children are excellent communicators and enthusiastic learners. Children in the Nursery separate confidently from their parents and are able to choose appropriate activities from the available resources. They recognise their names as they self-register. Children use their imaginations to create co-operative role plays, as seen in the Nursery cafe and Reception jungle scene. In Reception, children progress well in developing literacy skills and numerical awareness is positively developed, with children appreciating the concept of one more and one less.
- 3.17 The setting is highly successful in meeting the range of children's needs, with close attention being paid to providing additional support for those who have been identified as having SEND or EAL.
- 3.18 Children feel safe, secure and happy. The staff demonstrate a shared understanding and responsibility for protecting children, working closely together to keep children safe. The children demonstrate an appreciation of healthy living. They have an excellent understanding of personal hygiene routines, participate enthusiastically in PE lessons, exhibiting well-developed ball skills, and know how to stay safe when using the outdoor climbing equipment.
- 3.19 Since the previous inspection, assessment and planning procedures have been streamlined to remove unnecessary duplication. Effective systems are in place to identify areas for development and the school is well placed to build on its current very high standards.