



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

STRATFORD PREPARATORY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Stratford Preparatory School
DfE Number	937/6094
EYFS Number	EY 409397
Address	Stratford Preparatory School Church House Old Town Stratford-upon-Avon Warwickshire CV37 6B
Telephone Number	01789 297993
Fax Number	01789 297993
Email Address	secretary@stratfordprep.co.uk
Head	Mr Neil Musk
Proprietor and Principal	Mrs Catherine Quinn
Age Range	2 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	113
Gender of Pupils	Mixed
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 9 5-11: 90 3-5 (EYFS): 14
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sally Hill
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	7 and 8 October 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 the head, with all members of the EYFS staff, with the proprietor and with parents, observed before- and after-school care, attended registration sessions and an assembly. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Ann Stranack

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Pip Slater

Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of pre-prep, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Stratford Preparatory School is a proprietorial school for boys and girls aged from 2 to 11. The Nursery draws from the Montessori philosophy whilst implementing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. It aims to provide a caring community in which each individual child is valued within a family-orientated environment. It plans for a straightforward approach to education with an emphasis on Christian values and an understanding of other religions.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1989 by the current proprietor, who is also the principal. It is situated in the Old Town district of Stratford-upon-Avon. The main house was built in 1690 and was formerly a rectory. Later additions provide further school facilities. The two Nursery and Reception classrooms and a play room are housed in a separate building with their own outdoor classroom. The EYFS children also use the Paddock, across the road, for outdoor activities and the main school hall.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the outdoor classroom has become fully established and resourced. The Reception curriculum has been revised to provide further practical activities to accommodate different learning styles. Subject-specific resource boxes have been created for use in all three classes. There has been significant investment in information and communication technology (ICT). Parents' evenings are now organised to help parents understand how to support their children's learning.
- 1.4 There are 113 pupils on roll. Twenty-three of these are in the EYFS, 12 boys and 11 girls. Five boys and four girls are under two. All Nursery children attend part-time with a minimum of three sessions. The seven Reception children attend full-time. No children have English as an additional language or special educational needs. Two are being monitored for individual learning requirements. The children are predominantly white British and come from professional and business families living in local towns and villages.
- 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 table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Blue Room	Nursery 2-3 years
Yellow Rooms	Nursery 3-4 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 there is a system in place in the school to identify changes to regulatory requirements in order to routinely review school policies.
 2. Further develop planning for the children's outdoor all-weather play to increase their learning opportunities.

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. Rigorous planning for the youngest children gives priority to the prime areas of learning, ensuring that they play cooperatively and confidently while expressing themselves with increasing clarity and enjoy developing physically. All seven learning areas are thoroughly covered in detailed plans which engage the children and are frequently adapted in response to their interests, for example a Paddock picnic. Children mostly reach or exceed levels of development typical for their age. Daily plans include the excellently resourced outdoor areas, although very wet weather inhibits their use. The curriculum is enriched by specialist teachers for music, ballet and ICT, who engage and enthuse the children.
- 3.2 An excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning and the use of Montessori equipment encourage independent learners and promote enquiry. Regular, detailed assessments enable the staff to understand each child's individual needs comprehensively. They are used to monitor progress and plan the next steps of learning, for example Reception children relating shape knowledge to everyday objects. Staff have outstanding expectations, allowing time for children to consolidate ideas and develop their own solutions. They model enthusiastic behaviour, motivating younger children to enjoy making pasties using their recently purchased vegetables.
- 3.3 Regular staff meetings and daily discussion quickly identify any problems or frustrations the children experience. Timely support ensures that they all make excellent progress. Parents appreciate that they can discuss their children and receive advice on how to help them learn. Pre-inspection questionnaire responses and discussion show that parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are delighted by the range of experiences offered, their children's happiness and the rapid progress they make. The school's aim to provide a caring community within a family-orientated environment is well achieved.

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

- 3.4 Provision for the children's well-being is outstanding. The key person system provides outstanding care and encourages excellent bonds. These allow all children, including those under three and those with specific learning requirements, to arrive confidently and be happy throughout the school day. The well-established daily routines ensure that they settle enthusiastically into their chosen activity. The staff provide outstanding role models, encouraging the children to copy polite, considerate behaviour; for example children listen carefully to each other when answering questions. The youngest are expected and helped to be independent when preparing snacks and the oldest are proud to have responsibility for the register. The generous resources encourage imaginative play, observed when planting bulbs.
- 3.5 The importance of physical exercise is stressed when using the gymnastics equipment. Excellent snacks provided to Nursery children encourage healthy

eating. Independent hand washing is expected. The nutritious school lunches provide a happy social occasion with the children demonstrating excellent manners as they eat independently and chat confidently to the older pupils supervising the tables.

- 3.6 A very carefully planned programme, starting early in the summer term, successfully prepares children for their transition to the next class. The EYFS classes are separate from the main school building but the children interact positively and confidently with the older pupils at lunch and playtime. The Reception class joins enthusiastically with older infants for assemblies and some lessons.

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

- 3.7 Leadership and management are good. Governance and leadership give appropriate support to the EYFS. The EYFS staff work exceptionally well together. The team has an excellent understanding of individual needs and abilities so that each child is challenged by their learning programme. Staff plan for and track the children's achievements comprehensively.
- 3.8 Scrutiny of evidence prior to the inspection identified some deficiencies in updating the safeguarding policy in line with new requirements. These were substantially administrative and did not have an adverse impact on outcomes for children or the level of awareness and understanding staff were able to demonstrate in their day to day practice. By the time of the inspection, the school had taken suitable steps to ensure that all shortcomings in the policies had been dealt with, and it complies with all current requirements. The staff, who have been suitably checked, have a clear understanding of the well-established procedures necessary to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment.
- 3.9 All the EYFS team contribute to the ongoing self-evaluation system and agree the priorities for the detailed department development plan. Staff greatly appreciate the supervision in place to support them as they care for their group. The children benefit from the positive impact this, the very effective appraisal system and regular training programmes have on the standard of teaching, as the staff constantly improve their skills.
- 3.10 Exceptionally strong partnerships with parents support EYFS activities, for example with weekly projects. When necessary, appropriate interventions are provided by supportive external agencies, for example the dyslexia association.

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

- 3.11 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. All children, including the most able, make very good progress in relation to their starting points, particularly in reading and writing. Progress checks for the younger children and ongoing assessments for the older ones demonstrate excellent attainment, with most achieving and some exceeding the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. The two-year-old children talk confidently about their work, for example about scarecrows, and recognize their own and their friends' names. The oldest are beginning to write original sentences and read with increasing fluency; one proudly read 'The grave of the poet William Shakespeare'. The youngest children recognise numbers to five and beyond. By Reception they competently describe properties of shapes such as spheres.

- 3.12 The children's personal and social development is outstanding. The children thoroughly enjoy their school day. The younger children were very excited when they searched in soil for potatoes. The Reception children happily visited a local church, behaving in an exemplary manner. Their confidence shown with visitors demonstrates how safe children feel. At all ages they concentrate well when finding solutions to problems or developing imaginative ideas. They take an interest in and respect different opinions such as food choices.
- 3.13 The school gives outstanding attention to children's day-to-day well-being and safety. The staff understand the children extremely well so that they thrive in a happy, secure environment. Parents appreciate the high level of care provided by the diligent and committed team. Since the previous inspection the Reception curriculum includes provision for practical activities in all learning areas. This and the development plan demonstrate a strong commitment to secure the best possible outcomes for the children.