



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WOODLANDS SCHOOL**

**GREAT WARLEY**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

**INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Woodlands School Great Warley

Full Name of School	<b>Woodlands School Great Warley</b>
DfE Number	<b>881/6026</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY439501</b>
Address	<b>Woodlands School Warley Street Great Warley Brentwood Essex CM13 3LA England</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01277 233288</b>
Fax Number	<b>01277 232715</b>
Email Address	<b>info@woodlandswarley.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Katharine Mansfield</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Ken Lewis</b>
Age Range	<b>3 months to 11 years</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>144</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (75 boys; 69 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 4      5-11:      83 3-5 (EYFS): 57</b>
Joint Heads of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Emma Burman and Ms Catherine Duthie</b>
Head of Nursery Setting	<b>Mrs Emma Scott</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>1 Dec 2015 to 2 Dec 2015</b>

## PREFACE

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.

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 April 2013.

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 proprietor, 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 Sally Donaldson    Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of Kindergarten, HMC school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Woodlands School Great Warley, situated in a semi-rural setting near Brentwood in Essex, is an independent day school catering for children from 3 months to 11 years. The school is one of two in the area owned by Woodlands Schools Ltd. Directors belonging to a family, of whom one member is the proprietor, administer the company, supported by three additional directors appointed for their range of expertise and experience. A central head office provides administrative support for both schools.
- 1.2 Woodlands is a small family school, which aims to combine all that is traditionally best, together with progressive and forward-thinking ideas, to enable pupils to become socially responsible citizens and life-long learners. It seeks to foster curiosity, independence and a love of learning in a happy and safe environment, allowing the pupils to achieve their full potential in personal, social, spiritual and academic development.
- 1.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of two Reception classrooms, a Kindergarten for children aged 3 to 4 years and the Little Acorns Nursery, which opened in 2012, for infants aged 3 months to 3 years. All children in the EYFS have access to a range of outdoor areas including a woodland classroom.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, the grounds have been developed to provide a dedicated garden for the baby room and a variety of play surfaces for the whole EYFS. Toilet and hand washing facilities have been extensively refurbished. The current head was appointed in September 2015 and, following the previous inspection, a new management team has been appointed within the EYFS.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection the school had 144 pupils, of whom 75 were boys and 69 girls. Of these, 61 children were in the EYFS, including 4 under the age of two. One child in the EYFS had been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and was receiving specialist learning support. No children had a statement of educational need or an education and health care (EHC) plan. No children in the EYFS required support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 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***

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Tiggywinkle	Nursery (three months to two years)
Squirrel Nutkin	Nursery (two to three years)
Kindergarten	Nursery (three to four 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 procedures for recording recruitment checks and maintaining personnel files are robust.
  2. Ensure that information gleaned from the analysis of profile scores and other sources is used effectively to improve provision across the EYFS as a whole.

### **3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **3.(a) Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 3.2 As a result of very effective teaching and early interventions for those with SEND, all children, including those under the age of two, make good and consistent progress, relative to their individual starting points, and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.3 The quality of care and education contributes greatly to meeting the needs of the children who attend, including those under the age of two or with SEND. Practitioners listen effectively to all children, and support them very well in making independent choices. Activities are carefully adapted to meet individual needs and interests, with projects often stemming from children's own ideas. The close-knit, supportive community helps children feel secure and happy. As a result, their personal and emotional development is excellent.
- 3.4 Safeguarding, welfare health and safety are given high regard, and staff share a common goal to protect the wellbeing of every child. Staff are regularly trained in safeguarding and have recently undertaken PREVENT anti-radicalisation training. Stringent suitability checks have been completed for all staff, but these have not always been recorded with due diligence. Omissions to the central register of appointment apparent at the start of the inspection have now been rectified.
- 3.5 Recent senior appointments and management restructuring have brought vigour and energy to the setting. There is a shared vision for continued development and a very high capacity for achieving this. In response to the previous inspection, the balance of adult led and child initiated activities has been successfully adjusted to provide a wide range of open-ended opportunities for children to think for themselves, identify problems and devise their own solutions.

#### **3.(b) Effectiveness of leadership and management**

- 3.6 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.
- 3.7 Governance, through the board of directors and their advisors, is successful in providing drive and ambition for the continued development of the school. This vision is reflected at all levels of leadership and management. High expectations for what all children, including those with additional needs, can achieve are evident in the quality of resources, including high calibre staff, throughout the provision.
- 3.8 Well-established supervision programmes, including comprehensive induction for new staff, rigorous performance management and regular opportunities for professional development and training, are in place. As a result, staff feel exceptionally well supported in their roles and continually develop their skills and knowledge to support children's learning.
- 3.9 Leaders and managers understand the strengths of the provision extremely well. They have acted promptly to address any areas identified for development. Evaluation of the educational programmes, including the quality of teaching, learning



and assessment is highly effective. However, information is not always disseminated across the whole EYFS to ensure all staff understand what is needed to improve.

- 3.10 Leaders regularly consult parents for their views and all those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their suggestions are always considered, with explanations given if they were not to be followed.
- 3.11 All children, including those under the age of two, have many opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across all seven areas of learning and development. Excellent use is made of the wider school facilities such as the woodland classroom, and specialist staff for drama, dance, music, swimming, French and physical education further enhance the children's experiences.
- 3.12 Careful monitoring of planning results in a very creative curriculum that stimulates and motivates children's learning and lays the foundations for the next stage in children's learning. Transitions within the EYFS are sensitively managed, in partnership with parents, to ensure children are ready to move on. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are very well prepared for the transition to Year 1.
- 3.13 A positive approach to behaviour management based on a policy of 'catching children being good' provides clear expectations for children's behaviour. Leaders are aware of the importance of actively promoting fundamental British values and equality of opportunity. This is evident in the attractive displays representing a wide variety of cultures, and festivals, children's understanding of right and wrong and the principle of individual liberty and independence promoted through many activities, particularly those in the woodland classroom.
- 3.14 Arrangements for protecting children meet all statutory requirements. Suitability checks for all new staff are completed in a timely manner prior to them starting work. Insufficient rigour in recording details, and a lack of clarity in the maintenance of personnel files resulted in some administrative omissions in the single central record of appointments. These had been rectified by the end of the inspection. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rigorous training in the key areas of safeguarding, including preventing radicalisation, welfare, health and safety ensures staff are highly effective in promoting the children's well being.
- 3.15 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in conversation with inspectors parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. Every parent who responded indicated that they would recommend the setting to other parents.

### **3.(c) Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

- 3.16 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 3.17 All staff have consistently high expectations of what children can achieve. They know the children in their care extremely well and understand how they learn. As a result, practitioners create a stimulating environment that supports and challenges every child. Creatively planned activities, and enthusiastic teaching, motivate children and help them to progress well. In the best examples of teaching, activities are creative, engaging and well matched to children's needs and interests. All the teaching observed was at least good, and a significant proportion was outstanding.

- 3.18 Practitioners are excellent role models for effective learning behaviour. They join in with children's activities, extending ideas and enriching language development through the expert use of open-questioning and leaving time for children to solve problems independently. Plentiful, high quality resources support children's independent learning and discovery. The children play and work together with very high levels of co-operation and collaboration.
- 3.19 For new children, a comprehensive All About Me form helps practitioners to assess children's starting points, while ongoing observations build up a detailed picture of each child's learning journey. Parents regularly contribute their own observations through WOW moments that celebrate children's achievements outside of school. A recently introduced online learning journal for children over the age of three is highly valued by parents, who can see what, how and why the children are playing and how this supports their learning and development. For younger children progress is recorded equally effectively in individual profile folders. Practitioners make highly effective use of assessment data to track children's progress and to inform planning.
- 3.20 Robust monitoring of children's progress, expert guidance from the early years special needs co-ordinator and close links with external agencies, helps to ensure children in need of additional support are quickly identified enabling them to make good progress and achieve well.
- 3.21 Parents are very pleased with the information they receive from the school, stating that staff know the children extremely well, providing valuable guidance on supporting children's learning at home. In conversation with inspectors, parents described communication as "amazing: there is a completely open door policy". Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity is woven seamlessly through the whole setting. Staff recognise, value and celebrate the individuality of every child.
- 3.22 Children are very well prepared for the next stages of their learning due to the high quality of care and education they receive. Close links between each class and the rest of the school community ensures smooth transitions within and beyond the EYFS.

### **3.(d) Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

- 3.23 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding.
- 3.24 Children are happy and engaged due to the stimulating, caring environment and attentive practitioners who provide a very high level of personal care, particularly for children under the age of two and those with SEND. Staff are very focused on children's needs. As a result, children settle quickly and form close relationships with key people. Strong home/school links support children in making emotionally secure attachments to key people. Children are happy, confident and secure, readily approaching familiar adults for comfort or to share their excitement at a new experience. As a result children become confident, independent learners who engage imaginatively with their surroundings and the resources available to them.
- 3.25 Timely reminders help children to understand how to behave in ways that are safe, or to wash their hands before eating. Through effective communication and supportive environments, children are helped to feel and be independent.
- 3.26 Staff know and understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children due to the regular, timely training they receive. Policies and procedures relating to welfare, health and safety are consistently and rigorously implemented by all staff

thereby helping to assure the children's wellbeing. For example, extensive safety checks are completed prior to visiting the woodland classroom, and children clearly understood how to stay safe, including when using information and communications technology.

- 3.27 Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and considerate to others, spontaneously congratulating each other on the successful completion of an activity. Morning 'WakeUp/ShakeUp' sessions provide an excellent introduction to a life of healthy exercise. Freshly prepared lunches are a positive and enjoyable experience with an emphasis on good manners and healthy eating. Children are very well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society.

### **3.(e) Outcomes for children**

- 3.28 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 3.29 From their individual starting points, all children make consistently good, and often excellent, progress. Excellent provision in and beyond the classroom supports children's learning and development across all areas of the EYFS. Children under the age of two make rapid progress in the prime areas of development, as staff support their learning and development extremely well. Throughout the EYFS, most children, including those with additional needs, reach, and often exceed, the expected levels of development typical for their age. Very effective teaching and early interventions help to narrow any gaps between different ability groups. Appropriate steps are taken to promote prompt and regular attendance and to seek explanation for any absence.
- 3.30 Children of all ages are enthusiastic, independent learners who engage creatively with the rich array of imaginative resources available throughout the setting. Children develop fine motor skills building towers from the dolls' house furniture, and independently name shapes while cutting them out during an art activity. The youngest children become confident communicators due to the language support they receive during sensory and imaginative play. Older children listen attentively and speak confidently as they share ideas and answer questions in assembly or give detailed descriptions of their artwork. In Reception, children make rapid progress in literacy due to the structured phonics programme, writing their names with increasing accuracy and completing short sentences using capital letters and punctuation correctly. In mathematics, they order magnetic numbers, count accurately to 20 and can say what is one more or one less than a given number.
- 3.31 All children, including those under the age of two and those in need of additional support, develop the key skills needed for the next stage of their learning.