



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ORCHARD SCHOOL AND NURSERY

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Orchard School and Nursery
DfE Number	823/6018
EYFS Number	EY350158
Address	Orchard School and Nursery Higham Gobion Road Barton-le-Clay Bedford Bedfordshire MK45 4LT
Telephone Number	01582 882054
Email Address	admin@orchardschool.org.uk
Head	Mrs Anne Burton
Proprietor	Mrs Anne Burton
Age Range	0 to 9
Total Number of Pupils	111
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (56 boys; 55 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 24 5-9: 46 3-5 (EYFS): 41
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Jenny Carr
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	19 Mar 2013 to 20 Mar 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 January 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 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

Mrs Anne McConway

Early Years Lead Inspector

Ms Cheryl Mcnair

Team Inspector for Early Years (Head, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Orchard is an independent school and nursery for children from six months to nine years of age in Barton-le-Clay, located between Luton and Bedford. It is situated on two sites. Those children aged under three attend the unit on the Sharpenhoe Road site, housed on the ground and first floors in the Seedlings and Codlings rooms and the remainder attend the Higham Road site which was originally built as an infant school. This consists of the Russets, Bramleys and Blenheims rooms for three and four year olds, and Reception for four to five year olds. The Nursery opened in 1991 and the school in 2001. The Nursery children make full use of the school's facilities, such as the grounds, library and hall although they have separate classrooms and outdoor play areas. The school is proprietorial and the proprietor is also the head.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop a passion for learning in the children and for them 'to be the best that they can be'. Children come from surrounding towns and villages. Since the previous inspection two outdoor classrooms have been added adjacent to Blenheims, Russets and Bramleys and traffic-calming measures have been taken in the playground area. The school has refurbished the baby room and developed the grounds to include a sandpit, digging pit, and a canopy allotment extension.
- 1.3 The setting caters for 65 children aged from six months to five years. There are 19 who attend on a full-time basis and 46 attend on a part-time basis. Nineteen pupils attend the under 3's unit and 46 children attend the Nursery and Reception classes.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average with a broad range of abilities evident. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has not identified any pupils in the EYFS as having special educational needs and/or disabilities or English as an additional Language.
- 1.5 The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Seedlings UTU	EYFS Under 3
Codlings UTU	EYFS Under 3
Russets Nursery	EYFS Nursery
Bramleys Nursery	EYFS Nursery
Blenheims Nursery	EYFS Nursery
Reception	EYFS Reception
P1	Y1
P2	Y2
P3	Y3
P4	Y4
P5	Y5

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 improvements:
1. Fully embed the use of regular summaries of progress for children under three.

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 children who attend. The planning of the educational programmes in all areas of learning is thorough. Children are provided with interesting and challenging experiences both indoors and outdoors. There is an excellent balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning to promote the children's independence. Staff know the children well and meet their individual needs and interests outstandingly. This enables all children to make outstanding progress in their learning from their starting points particularly in numeracy, literacy, positive behaviour and listening skills.
- 3.2 Staff have high expectations of all children and provide excellent role models. Attention to detail is the hallmark of this setting. The children are enabled to be confident and use language well to communicate clearly. Staff help children through reinforcing vocabulary and providing the older children with word banks of common words. They use open-ended questions which enable children to think critically about simple problems. An interesting range of activities encourages children to widen their vocabulary and understanding. High levels of concentration and engagement are promoted through variation of activities which suits the interests of individual children. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is promoted well enabling them to participate in all activities with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Regular assessments of the children's progress are used to plan the next steps in each child's learning, but the use of regular summaries of progress for children under three is not yet fully embedded. There is sufficient challenge for more able children as they question staff and experiment with accessible resources. Parents are engaged in their children's development and learning from the settling-in stage onwards.

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

- 3.3 Provision for the children's well-being is outstanding. Children are cared for extremely well in this safe, warm and stimulating learning environment. The 'key persons' promote high standards of courtesy and behaviour and give priority to the children's happiness, health and safety. This ensures that all, especially the younger children, form strong relationships with one another and with adults, and develop their independence. The youngest children sit very patiently while awaiting their lunch and have good control of their cutlery while eating. Those aged over three initiate and engage adults in conversations on a wide range of topics from coral reefs to health. They enjoy exploring their surroundings and using their imagination both indoors and outdoors. During the Easter Egg hunt they carefully examined and discussed the basket of different eggs found.
- 3.4 Children are taught how to keep themselves safe and that healthy eating and exercise are important. They are able to manage their own hygiene needs and know what snacks are healthy. Nutritious lunches are cooked on the premises for all. Outdoor play and activities planned in the hall, such as dance and ballet, enable children to develop their physical skills. Children collaborate well in their play and

games and choose activities independently. They are prepared for each subsequent stage of education sensitively, enabling smooth transitions.

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

- 3.5 Leadership and management are outstanding. The head, as proprietor, takes a keen interest in links with parents, learning programmes and the well-being of the children on a day-to-day basis. Rigorous systems for self-evaluation inform the ambitious development plan. Regularly updated policies and procedures are written with meticulous attention to detail and are effectively implemented throughout the setting. Staff have received appropriate training in child protection, first aid, health and safety and are closely supervised and supported in their continuous professional development through performance management. They successfully access computer-based training provided through the local authority. Risk assessments and fire procedures are well known by staff. External agencies are consulted readily. The whole of the EYFS is closely monitored as is the progress of each child. The partnership with parents is strong with very active parent participation in fundraising for the school and close involvement in ensuring their children's progress at school. The parent questionnaires indicated high levels of satisfaction with the quality of care and education. A few parents expressed unease regarding late notification of information and the way their concerns are addressed. Inspection evidence shows that the website is informative and the school has an appropriate complaints policy which is implemented effectively.

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

- 3.6 The quality and standards throughout the setting are outstanding. The children make excellent progress relative to their ability and needs. Those children over three use phonics and the high-frequency words to develop reading and writing skills and a structured reading scheme is in place which enables them to make excellent progress. They write their names making appropriate use of punctuation, capitals and lower case letters. They show a good understanding of number including recognition of numerals, sequencing counting to count to 60 and beyond and adding in tens. Those under three have well-developed listening skills, exemplary behaviour and are developing good communication skills.
- 3.7 The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. All children are well mannered, polite, feel secure and are happy while gradually developing independence. All receive equal opportunities to succeed. Different cultures and beliefs are discussed in relation to celebrations and festivals through stories, dress, displays and drama. Excellent use is made of seasonal features to increase the children's knowledge and vocabulary, for example, St Patrick's Day and Easter. The children implicitly trust the staff, who safeguard their welfare and take all necessary measures to ensure this. The development plan is evidence of good self-evaluation. Teamwork is excellent and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement.