



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WILMSLOW PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wilmslow Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Wilmslow Preparatory School		
DfE Number	875/6011		
Registered Charity Number	525924		
Address	Wilmslow Preparatory School 7 Grove Avenue Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5EG		
Telephone Number	01625 524246		
Fax Number	01625 536660		
Email Address	secretary@wilmslowprep.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Paul Reynolds		
Chair of Governors	Mr Nick Rudgard		
Age Range	3 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	124		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 92
	3-5 (EYFS):	32	11-18: 0
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	124	
Number of Boarders	Total:	0	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Christa Rodwell		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection dates	21 Jun 2011 to 22 Jun 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in June 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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 31st 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 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, though inspectors will 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.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The school was founded in 1909 and moved to its present site in 1925. Originally for girls aged five to eleven, it now has girls from three to eleven. The school is situated in Wilmslow, on the outskirts of Greater Manchester. It is administered by a non-profit-making charitable trust and managed by a governing body. Since the previous inspection a new headmaster and chair of governors have been appointed, the new sports hall has been completed, the Kindergarten has moved to the Cobham Block and a Nursery, run by a separate business, has been opened on site.
- 1.2 The school's primary aim is to provide the best possible education for its pupils in a happy, caring and stimulating environment. It also aims, within a broad, balanced and varied curriculum, to ensure pupils develop lively, enquiring and creative minds. Considerable emphasis is placed upon the school's desire to value and maximise each pupil's potential and confidence.
- 1.3 The school has 124 pupils of which 32 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 12 attending part time, and 92 are in the main school. Of the ten pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), three receive additional support. The school has identified 26 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), and fourteen of these receive extra help. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN).
- 1.4 Most pupils join the school at the age of three. Prospective pupils have a taster day at school when they are informally assessed for levels of literacy and numeracy. Almost all pupils remain at the school until the age of eleven. Most live locally and a small number travel from Greater Manchester and other parts of Cheshire. Almost all parents are professional or business people.
- 1.5 The average ability of the pupils is above the national average, although there is a wide range of abilities within each year group. At the age of eleven, pupils move on to a variety of senior schools of their choice and many with scholarships.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC Name
Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception

Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory Department

School	NC name
Form 1-Infants	Year 1
Form 2-Infants	Year 2
Form 3-Juniors	Year 3
Form 4-Juniors	Year 4
Form 5-Juniors	Year 5
Form 6-Juniors	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 Pupils' achievement throughout the school is outstanding, indicating how well the school is fulfilling its aims.
- 2.2 Pupils are very good listeners and are articulate. They write imaginatively and are concise in comprehension. They are adept in arithmetic and algebra, and in science they investigate successfully. In humanities they address important issues maturely, whilst their work in the creative arts is outstanding. Pupils' use information and communication technology (ICT) well, an outcome of the improved ICT provision since the previous inspection. Pupils with LDD, EAL and SEN are well supported and achieve well. In extra-curricular activities pupils achieve excellent standards in a variety of sports, music, doing particularly well in graded examinations, dance and drama. Each year, a notable number of pupils gain scholarships to the schools of their choice.
- 2.3 The following analysis uses the national data for 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at age eleven were excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools, with over half of pupils reaching Level 5. Their classwork is also of a high standard.
- 2.4 Pupils' attainment in standardised tests, classwork and in their written work indicates good long-term progress when compared with the average of pupils of similar ability. Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning. They work with admirable commitment whether it is individually or in groups. They seek to match the high expectations of their teachers in class and in extra-curricular activities. Their committed approach is an important factor in their high achievement. Pupils with LDD, EAL or SEN make good progress as a result of the excellent support programme. The gifted and talented also progress well.
- 2.5 Curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum and extra-curricular activities that fulfil the school's aim to provide the best possible education for its pupils. The extensive community links positively benefit the pupils. The reading competition during the inspection involved them with other local schools, whilst their performances at various local functions contribute to their experience and growing confidence.
- 2.6 Pupils' success in academic work is supported by the overall excellent quality of the teaching. Teachers are knowledgeable and have clear and appropriate objectives. In the main, they provide excellent variety in their lessons, though on occasions there is over-use of worksheets that inhibits pupils' individuality. In the main, pupils are challenged effectively through the good resources and methods that are used. Good attention is given to the needs of pupils of different abilities, including the gifted and talented. The whole-school approach to assessment is excellent, with the careful tracking of pupils enabling staff to discuss purposefully how to further pupils' learning. The marking of books is regular, and often constructive.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.7 Pupils' personal development is outstanding and reflects the success with which the school is meeting its aim to maximise each pupil's potential and confidence.
- 2.8 Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the difference between the spiritual and the secular through religious education, personal and social education and their hymns and prayers in assemblies. They recognise that each individual is different and has different gifts, and so they develop self-esteem and confidence, recognising that they, as well as their peers, can make a positive contribution to the common good. Pupils have an excellent approach to moral issues. They recognise the value of rules such as their class Golden Rules. They respect the rights of others and conduct themselves in relation to adults and other pupils in an exemplary manner. They know they have a moral responsibility for those less well off than themselves and so willingly suggest and support charitable appeals. The 'Buddy' system is a further example of their concern for others.
- 2.9 Pupils' social development is excellent. They willingly take on responsibilities. As form and team captains, and different types of monitors, and school council members, they develop an awareness of the importance of mutual support and the need for leadership. Culturally, pupils benefit positively from the various day and residential trips, and their involvement in activities such as art, music and drama. They learn of different world faiths through religious education and develop a knowledge of the life and beliefs of those in other times and countries through history and geography.
- 2.10 The school's pastoral care is outstanding. The anti-bullying and safeguarding policies are fully implemented and the staff have regular training in the different areas of care. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few pupils indicated that they were not treated similarly by all teachers, but in conversation with inspectors pupils expressed their delight at being at the school and at how well they were supported by the staff. Inspectors observed excellent relationships between staff and pupils.
- 2.11 The school has a suitable policy for supporting those with disabilities. It also has well-structured policies and procedures covering fire precautions and health and safety; the provision for taking care of those who fall ill is also good. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and appropriate choices are offered by the well-organised school meals service. The admission register is well maintained and the system for the daily registration of pupil attendance is efficient.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.12 Governance is excellent. Governors are highly committed to the aims of the school and support its development through ensuring it is well resourced and staffed. Individual governors carry out key tasks through their links with the school and contribute to the well organised committee structure. They provide a wide range of experience and expertise.
- 2.13 Leadership and management are of high quality and the senior management team work hard and effectively, ensuring excellent provision throughout the school. Monitoring within the recently developed appraisal system ensures that all teachers and support staff are evaluated and set targets. Professional development is regarded highly and impacts positively on performance. Newly qualified teachers and new staff are helped to settle in the school through the thorough induction policy. The school has appropriate development plans. The centralised register is well maintained and volunteers have appropriate checks.
- 2.14 The school's excellent accommodation includes a first-rate sports hall and excellent outside play areas for the EYFS. The school is extremely well administered.
- 2.15 Links with parents are excellent. They have access to a wide range of information, receive good quality reports, which have improved since the previous inspection, are openly received by the school and are encouraged to support school functions. The complaints policy is clear and specifies the time frames helpfully. The active parents' association supports the school well. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents expressed extremely positive views about the work of the school and what it is providing for their child.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation or further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that the quality of pupils' work is not limited by the overuse of worksheets.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. Excellent teaching encourages independent thinking and promotes in children confidence and an eagerness to learn. Children's individual needs are met very well and every child is individually valued ensuring that they make excellent progress in their learning and development. Children are safeguarded effectively and cared for exceptionally well. Their personal development is excellent and a strength of the school. Staff are constantly looking for ways to improve the very high quality of provision.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Effective policies are implemented successfully to safeguard children and eliminate discrimination. Staff promote equality diligently so that all children achieve well. Strong links with other settings and the local authority, and an excellent partnership with parents, contribute significantly to children's learning and development. Parents are most supportive of the setting and value the way they are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning. They receive regular reports about their children's progress, which are the products of careful observations and detailed tracking. Staff hold appropriate qualifications, fully understand their responsibilities for child protection and have excellent access to continuing professional development. A wide range of high quality and imaginative resources provide a varied learning environment both indoors and outside. Those in charge of the setting have a clear vision of the way forward and at regular departmental meetings staff discuss further improvements that contribute to the effective development plan.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Classrooms are interesting and welcoming places where children learn and develop exceptionally well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. Activities are planned based on the interests of the children and the areas of continuous provision are enhanced according to their ideas. Informative 'Learning Journey' portfolios document the children's achievements, giving a real sense of the individual child. The indoor and outdoor environments are used to their full potential and children develop their imagination and acquire problem solving skills through an excellent range of activities and resources. An excellent balance is struck between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Observational assessments are used to plan activities tailored to children's individual learning needs and effective tracking provides an accurate profile of each child's progress. Welfare is given a high priority; children are well supported by staff and are taught about being safe in many contexts such as how to carry and use scissors safely. Staff discuss safety issues before trips. Detailed risk assessments for all aspects of the setting together with regular checks of equipment, create a safe environment. Relationships throughout the setting are excellent.

4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Most children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and abilities, achieving the learning goals by the end of the EYFS. They are lively, inquisitive, industrious and articulate, working very well both individually and co-operatively. They ask and answer questions enthusiastically and confidently make reasoned guesses. They respond positively to adults, are keen to share their experiences and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Early writing, reading, technological and mathematical skills are well-developed. Younger children are confident to experiment with writing, and can count reliably up to and beyond ten everyday objects. Older children can use their developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. They have well-developed writing, creative and ICT skills and can research information independently. Children feel safe, form happy friendships and are considerate of each other. They understand that physical exercise, healthy eating and personal hygiene are essential for a healthy lifestyle.

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Terry Dillon

Reporting Inspector

Mr Ian Wood

Former Headmaster IAPS school

Mrs Felicity Lawson

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector