



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WILMSLOW PREPARATORY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE 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
Head	Mrs Helen Rigby
Chair of Governors	Mr Nick Rudgard
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	118
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (17 boys; 101 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 41 5-11: 77
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Lorna Pierce
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	11 Nov 2014 to 12 Nov 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 June 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 a governor, 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

Miss Valerie Craven

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Deborah Northin

Team Inspector for Early Years

(Head of Infants and Nursery, GSA School)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wilmslow Preparatory School is a co-educational school for pupils from 3 to 11 years of age. The school aims 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. The school was founded in 1909, and moved to its present site in 1925. It is administered by a non-profit-making charitable trust and is overseen by an elected board of governors, each with a particular responsibility within the school. The school is situated in Wilmslow, on the outskirts of Greater Manchester. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for pupils aged three to five is an integral part of Wilmslow Preparatory School.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection in June 2011 a new headteacher has been appointed, through some restructuring two assistant heads have been appointed, and the school became co-educational in 2013.
- 1.3 At the time of this inspection, which focused only on the Early Years Foundation Stage, the number of pupils on roll was 118 pupils, including 41 in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with 20 attending part time, and 77 in the main school. 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. The majority of parents are professional or business people.
- 1.4 The ability level 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 onto a variety of senior schools of their choice and some with scholarships. Of the thirteen pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), three receive additional support. The school has identified 20 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and all of these receive extra help. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN).
- 1.5 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 (ages 3 to 4 years)
Reception	Reception (ages 4 to 5 years)

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 Further develop the outdoor provision to enhance opportunities for exploration and investigation activities.

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 pupils who attend. The educational programmes are excellent and are wide ranging, covering all of the areas of learning and enabling all children, including the three year olds to exceed the level of development typical for their age. This strong provision enables children who have been identified as having SEND or EAL, and children who are gifted and able, to make good progress.
- 3.2 Very caring and supportive staff have successfully created a welcoming and nurturing environment where children can achieve well, in line with the school's values and ethos. Assessment is used well in identifying children's needs, enabling staff to plan appropriate activities to support the learning and development of each child. Staff plan a suitable variety of timetabled, structured activities, including phonics, literacy and numeracy. They provide some exploration and investigation experiences, particularly during indoor creative activities, highlighted well in the Kindergarten and Reception classroom displays.
- 3.3 The planned 'Welly Wednesday' outings enable the younger and older children to experience the outdoor environment, contributing to their sensory learning. For example, when children noticed water running from gutters and disappearing down drains. The older children have suitable opportunities to develop their language skills during focused activities, for example, when sorting clothing suitable for hot and cold climates. The younger and older children's problem solving skills are fostered well during 'Thinking Thursday' activities. Staff make learning enjoyable, as observed in the Kindergarten class when children were attempting to read a letter left by the 'number fairy'. All children respond very well to the staff's high expectations of them. They are very enthusiastic and motivated learners, shown well in a physical development activity involving mini games and relay races to develop coordination, agility and spatial awareness.
- 3.4 Staff have established excellent partnerships with children's parents and carers, as seen in the overall positive responses to the pre-inspection parent questionnaire. Parents were particularly positive about how the school had created a welcoming and nurturing environment, and how staff know their child very well. In addition, parents commented about how they are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning, such as through sharing reading records and observations. Morning routines with staff and parents facilitate the shared responsibility for learning.
- 3.5 Staff are available to parents to discuss achievements and progress on a daily basis as well as giving guidance within progress reports, and parents evening. Children are encouraged to reach their full potential through the appropriate tracking of their next steps, and before- and after-school care and activities are available to all those in the EYFS.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is outstanding. Members of staff are very caring and supportive, particularly of the younger children, and as a result, these children form secure emotional attachments with adults. Key people have established excellent relationships with the younger children, which has a positive impact on meeting their educational and welfare needs.
- 3.7 The older children are encouraged to celebrate a range of festivals, such as Diwali, especially through indoor creative and investigative activities. They are learning about the importance of healthy eating, such as during lunchtime and snack time routines, and are frequently encouraged to eat fresh fruit. All of the children understand the importance of washing their hands after going to the toilet and after messy activities. They feel very secure and display a high level of confidence. Children's awareness of the need for physical exercise is enhanced through weekly physical development activities that are delivered by a specialist teacher, and through supervised access to the various outdoor areas.
- 3.8 All staff work closely together to ensure that smooth transitions take place, for example from Kindergarten to Reception, and from Reception to Year 1. At all levels, staff, including those in Year 1, ensure that they share developmental information about each child, enabling staff to be aware of children's individual needs and starting points.

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

- 3.9 Leadership and management are outstanding. Aspirations are high and there is a clear vision that is communicated well by the EYFS leadership, enabling staff to share and develop their secure practice within the school. Very effective teamwork contributes greatly to the progress and development of all children.
- 3.10 Members of the governing board are effectively involved in the work of the EYFS, including one who is responsible for the school and early years curriculum. This has had a positive impact on the overall provision, particularly in the restructuring of senior management, and the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures. All statutory responsibilities are discharged correctly. These arrangements promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere in which children thrive. The children's well-being and safeguarding are a central focus of the school, enhanced through thorough risk assessments, and a genuine concern for the welfare and personal development of children.
- 3.11 Senior staff evaluate the educational programmes and other provision on a regular basis. A robust self-evaluation provides a secure basis for planning the school's development, for example, in the EYFS curriculum development plan, which sets out clear aims and actions, and whose implementation is monitored carefully. The plan had already identified the need to further develop the outdoor provision to enhance opportunities for exploration and investigation activities.
- 3.12 Excellent partnerships have been established with parents, external professionals, and local school cluster groups, all contributing significantly to improving outcomes for children. Suitable staff appraisals and one-to-one supervisions are completed on a regular basis, focusing on key strengths and areas for development, and are used effectively to identify professional training needs. The school actively encourages

the development of staff's knowledge and understanding, such as through 'in house' and external training opportunities, for example, synthetic phonics training.

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

- 3.13 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. The children's achievements and progress exceed age-related expectations in all areas of learning in relation to their various starting points. Physical development is promoted well for the younger children, such as through skilfully manoeuvring large wheeled toys. The older children are developing their speaking and listening skills, for example through 'circle time', and are learning about blending letter sounds to build words during a variety of well planned activities. These skills are further enhanced through daily reading practice at home. All of the children frequently identify numbers and count everyday objects, such as counting pine cones and conkers. Children are learning skills for the future by operating a suitable range of educational technology, for example within the 'fire station' role play area, and use of the interactive whiteboard to sort clothes as part of continuous provision. Specialist teaching in physical development and in French contributes positively to outcomes for children.
- 3.14 The learning and care provided by key people ensures that all of the children's needs are identified and met very well. These are highlighted well through the staff's suitable evaluation and planning processes, also through high quality interactions with the children. Those who have been identified with SEND and EAL have their needs met very effectively, for example through additional support provided by the school's SENCO.
- 3.15 All aspects of the children's personal, social and emotional development are fostered well through their positive interactions with the very caring and supportive staff. Children display exemplary behaviour, are polite and courteous. They are respectful towards each other, visitors and staff, and know how to stay safe. Children take delight in being chosen as 'special helpers' or 'superstar of the day' as reward for excellent behaviour and work. Secure leadership and management ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Since the previous inspection, the setting has responded well to the recommendation. This included ensuring that the quality of children's work is not limited by the overuse of worksheets.