



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**FOREST SCHOOL**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Forest School

Full Name of School	<b>Forest School</b>
DfE Number	<b>358/6008</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY377806</b>
Address	<b>Forest School Moss Lane Timperley Altrincham Cheshire WA15 6LJ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01619 804075</b>
Fax Number	<b>01619 039275</b>
Email Address	<b>office@forestschool.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mr Rick Hyde</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Steven Wade</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>199</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (95 boys; 104 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>1</b> 5-11: <b>134</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>64</b> 11-18: <b>0</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Heather Wardle</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>12 to 13 May 2015</b>

## 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 integrated inspection was in May 2012.

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

Miss Victoria Plenderleith

Team Inspector for Early Years  
(Former Head of Pre-Prep, ISA School)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Forest School is a co-educational, non-denominational preparatory school for pupils from the ages of two to eleven. The school seeks for all pupils to become confident, secure, caring individuals who achieve personal success and develop a love of learning within a warm, welcoming, safe and secure environment. It aims to provide a broad, balanced and enriching curriculum, through enabling the continuous professional development of all staff. It seeks to encourage, value and extend every pupil's contribution to the school, ensuring that each one achieves his or her full potential and strives for self improvement, by recognising and celebrating the success of everyone. It strives to build strong, collaborative partnerships with families and the local community. The school was founded in 1924, and is situated in the suburb of Timperley in Altrincham, south Manchester. The main building is a converted Victorian house and other buildings have been added over the years to provide further facilities. The school is overseen by governors, often referred to as directors, each with a particular responsibility within the school. This includes one governor who oversees the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and the safeguarding requirements throughout the school. The school is owned and administered by Bellevue Schools Ltd.
- 1.2 There are 199 pupils in the school, including 65 in the EYFS, with 31 attending part time and 34 attending full time. Within the EYFS, there are two children who are learning English as an additional language (EAL), and the children who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive support. None of the EYFS children has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.3 Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and a few come from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils come from professional or business families and live within a ten-mile radius of the school. The ability profile of the school is above the national average; almost all pupils are of at least above average ability, with a good proportion having ability that is well above average.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (ages 2 to 3)
Kindergarten	Nursery (ages 3 to 4)
Reception	Reception (ages 4 to 5)

## **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 improvement.
- Include the Nursery staff in the use of a digital system to track progress for children of all ages, and to identify the next steps in their learning.

### **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 very wide ranging, covering all of the areas of learning and enabling all children, including the under-threes, to exceed the level of attainment typical for their age. This strong provision enables children who have been identified as having SEND, children who are learning English as an additional language, and children who are able, to make excellent progress in relation to their starting points.
- 3.2 Nurturing and supportive staff have successfully created a homely and welcoming environment that contributes positively to children's achievements. This is in line with the school's aims, values and ethos. Assessment is extremely accurate and is used very effectively in identifying children's needs, enabling staff to plan appropriate activities to support the learning and development of each child. Assessment checks for two-year-olds are completed and shared with parents and carers as required.
- 3.3 Staff plan a wide range of appropriate timetabled structured activities, including literacy and numeracy. They provide a variety of high quality indoor and outdoor exploration and investigation experiences. For example, in the Reception class, children enjoyed observing the life cycle of a butterfly. In the Nursery, the younger children took delight in watching, through magnifying glasses, snails moving along a large piece of paper. Those in Reception have many opportunities to develop their communication and language skills during focused activities, for example, through the 'book of the week'. They are skilful at retelling a story in the correct sequence, and are able to use their imagination to suggest alternative ideas and story lines. These skills are further consolidated through sharing their reading books with staff in school and parents at home.
- 3.4 Staff consistently make learning fun and very enjoyable. For example, the youngest children in the Nursery took great pleasure in a range of vigorous racing activities in preparation for their sports day. Those in Reception enjoyed a 'House Team' meeting alongside older children in the school, particularly in the nomination of other children for acts of kindness. All children respond very well to the staff's high expectations of them, and as a result they are very enthusiastic and motivated learners.
- 3.5 Staff have established excellent partnerships with children's parents and carers, as seen in the highly positive responses to the pre-inspection parent questionnaire. Parents were particularly positive about the 'sense of community' created, the range of learning opportunities available for their children, the high level of pastoral care, and the chance for every child to excel whatever their strengths are. There were isolated criticisms made by parents about the information received about their child's progress, the amount of appropriate homework set for children, and how the school handles concerns. The inspection reviewed practice and documentation in these areas and judged that the setting's arrangements were appropriate.

- 3.6 Staff adopt an 'open door' policy with parents and are available to discuss achievements and progress on a daily basis, as well as giving guidance within progress reports. Children are encouraged to reach their full potential through the accurate tracking of progress and the identification of their next steps, with the result that they are well-prepared for the next stage of their learning.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is outstanding. Staff adopt a very nurturing and supportive approach, particularly for the youngest children, and as a result, children form secure emotional attachments with adults. The staff work very effectively together to ensure that smooth transitions take place within the setting or on into Year 1. At all levels, there is a sharing of accurate developmental information about each child, enabling all staff to be fully aware of each child's individual needs and starting points.
- 3.8 Key people have established excellent relationships with children, which has a positive impact on meeting their educational and welfare needs. All children feel very secure, have a good sense of humour, and display a high level of confidence. Children's confidence is shown very clearly during outdoor activities, such as when the younger children take turns to pedal a large wheeled toy, or stand on a platform attached to the back of this, as a passenger.
- 3.9 They are encouraged to celebrate a wide range of festivals, such as Eid, Diwali, and the Chinese New Year, especially through high quality creative and sensory activities. All of the children are developing an awareness of the need for vigorous physical exercise, this is promoted well through indoor and outdoor activities.
- 3.10 They are learning about the importance of healthy eating, such as during snack time routines, when they are encouraged to make healthy choices. Children understand the importance of washing their hands after going to the toilet, after handling mini beasts and school pets, and before cooking activities.

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

- 3.11 Leadership and management of the provision are outstanding. Aspirations are very high and there is a clear vision that is communicated well by the EYFS leadership, enabling staff to share and develop their excellent practice within the school. Very effective teamwork and staff deployment contributes greatly to the progress and development of all children.
- 3.12 Governors are actively involved in the work of the EYFS, including one who is specifically responsible for overseeing the setting. This has had a very positive impact on the overall provision. All responsibilities are undertaken very thoroughly, including those for educational development and safeguarding. These arrangements promote a highly enabling and inclusive environment in which all children thrive. Children's well-being and safeguarding are of paramount importance in the school, enhanced through comprehensive risk assessments, and a genuine concern for the welfare and personal development of children.
- 3.13 Senior staff evaluate and monitor the educational programmes and other provision frequently and very effectively. An accurate self-evaluation provides a secure basis for planning the school's development, identifying clear strengths and areas for

further development. For example, the setting had already noted that staff in Reception use a digital system to track children's progress and to identify next steps in their learning, whereas those in the Nursery do not.

- 3.14 Excellent partnerships have been established with parents and external agencies, contributing significantly to improving outcomes for the children. Thorough staff appraisals and one-to-one discussions with staff are completed on a regular basis, focusing on key strengths and areas for development, and are used to identify professional training needs. The school identifies very accurately staff's individual strengths, and encourages the development of their knowledge and understanding, such as through 'in house' training. The school is successful in identifying and fully using individuals' strengths to enhance the overall provision.

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

- 3.15 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 under-threes, such as through skilfully manoeuvring large wheeled toys. The older Nursery children are developing varied speaking and listening skills through shared discussions at 'circle times', and also during focused activities.
- 3.16 Children in Reception learn how to blend letter sounds to build words, and clearly enjoy their spelling tests, during a variety of well planned activities. These skills are further enhanced through regular reading practice in school and at home. The most able children read words such as 'waddled', 'frightened' and 'climbed', and recognise punctuation in their stories. They are able to identify and recognise numbers, quickly recall subtraction facts, such as eight take away three, and some are able to subtract beyond ten and record their own calculations. Children count everyday objects, such as other children, and use mathematical language appropriately. All of the children are learning skills for the future by operating a suitable range of information and communication technology equipment, for example, in the Nursery, when younger children worked together to 'dress the baby'. The specialist physical education and French teaching contributes very positively to outcomes for children.
- 3.17 The learning and care provided by key people ensures that all of the children's needs are very accurately identified and met. This is highlighted well through staff's comprehensive evaluation and planning processes, also through high quality interactions with the children. Children who have been identified as having SEND or EAL, together with the able, have their needs met very effectively.
- 3.18 All of the children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered effectively through their positive interactions with very nurturing and supportive staff. Children are developing a sensitivity to others through caring for their class pets and when handling mini beasts. They display exemplary behaviour, are courteous and respectful towards each other, visitors and staff, and know how to stay safe. Children in Reception take delight in receiving merit points, and children in the Nursery enjoy receiving reward stickers for their behaviour and work.
- 3.19 Secure leadership and management ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. The setting plans well for its future, drawing upon accurate self-evaluation. It has responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection. These included reassessing the provision for pupils with SEND to

ensure that they always achieve as well as they can, to ensure that tasks within the classroom are always matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities, to revise the school development plan so that it is focused on the key priorities over the next three years, and in the EYFS, to include targets for further improvement in reports to parents.