



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

BERKHAMSTED PRE-PREP AND BERKHAMSTED DAY NURSERY

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

21 TO 22 JUNE 2016



School's Details

Full Name of School	Berkhamsted Pre-Prep and Berkhamsted Day Nursery
DfE Number	919/6227
EYFS Number	EY449876
Registered Charity Number	310630
Address	Berkhamsted Pre-Prep and Berkhamsted Day Nursery Chesham Road Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 2SZ
Telephone Number	01442 358188
Email Address	preprepoffice@berkhamstedschool.org
Head	Mrs Karen O'Connor
Chairman of Trustees	Mr Gavin Laws
Age Range	5 months to 7 years
Total Number of Pupils	265
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (134 boys; 131 girls)
Early Years Foundation Stage	145
Pupils' Ability	The school does not use standardised tests. However, its own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above the national average.
Pupils' Needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is nine. None have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Nine pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all whom receive support.
History of the School	Berkhamsted Pre-Prep and Berkhamsted Day Nursery are part of Berkhamsted Schools Group. Berkhamsted School was established almost 500 years ago. The school acquired the site of Haresfoot School in 2012, incorporating the existing Day Nursery on the premises into the group and relocating the pre-prep there from its original site, which it shared with the prep school.
Ownership and Governing Structure	Berkhamsted Schools Group is an incorporated charity whose governors are the company directors and trustees, exercising control over all aspects of its work.

School's Details

School Structure	The Day Nursery provides childcare for children aged from five months to three years, from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm for fifty weeks of the year. The pre-prep educates those aged from 3 to 7 years, after which pupils transfer to the prep school.
Inspection Dates	21 to 22 June 2016
Other Useful Information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Both the Day Nursery and the pre-prep are co-educational.ii) The pre-prep offers childcare for pupils from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm.iii) The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises both the Day Nursery, and the Nursery and Reception classes in the pre-prep.

About the Inspection

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any concerns about quality identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and, as such, reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupil performance is in place.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1 - 4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6 - 16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17 - 21] are met.

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22 - 31] are met.

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with Education, Health and Care plans or English as an Additional Language. This also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [Paragraph 34] is met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

Children at all stages of development within the EYFS make consistently rapid progress in relation to their individual starting points which culminates in almost every child achieving or, in many cases, exceeding the expected levels of development for their age. Those with SEND or EAL are very well supported through close partnership between the school, parents and, where appropriate, outside agencies. All children as a result are very effectively prepared for progression into Year 1 and beyond.

The emotional well-being of children is a priority in this caring, nurturing setting. Staff understand and implement safeguarding and welfare procedures thoroughly. They recognise their responsibilities for protecting children, and leadership and management are diligent in ensuring that appropriate training and support is provided for all. Children consequently feel safe, secure and well cared for, and their personal, social and emotional development is excellent.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision, including identifying areas for development, are highly effective in promoting continuous improvement. In response to recommendations made in the previous inspection report, the setting has successfully introduced a more systematic approach to staff appraisal and steps have been taken to include parents' views in the evaluation of children's progress.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the EYFS is outstanding.

Leaders and senior managers have a shared and consistent vision for the continued development of the EYFS, driven by a nurturing and child-centred ethos. Close links across the different parts of the EYFS and with the whole school leadership, including governors, results in a well-developed strategy for continuous improvement.

Staff are well supported by senior leaders and managers through regular supervision and appraisal, although these have not always been formally documented. Induction and mentoring for new staff is comprehensive. Staff at all levels are actively encouraged to participate in continuous professional development to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated and enhanced to the benefit of all children.

Self-evaluation and reflective practice are strongly embedded in the school's ethos. As a result, the quality of the provision is continually monitored to ensure that the high expectations for children's development and the quality of care and breadth of the curriculum are maintained at the already high levels.

Parental views are carefully considered, and children are regularly asked to make their own suggestions for improvements to the provision. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in conversation with inspectors, most parents expressed positive views regarding the quality of the setting. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes their children's welfare and helps them to develop as individuals. Parents feel welcome in the school and are confident that they will receive a prompt response to any concerns or queries.

The excellent range and availability of resources, combined with specialist teaching in drama, music, physical education, dance and French provide an excellent breadth and depth to the curriculum which accurately reflects the children's developmental needs and interests. The curriculum is further enhanced through the use of the wider school facilities and grounds, including an extensive woodland learning environment.

Planning is carefully monitored to ensure full coverage of the EYFS areas of learning. Any gaps in provision or in children's learning are quickly identified and appropriate steps taken to ensure that children are fully prepared for the next stage of their learning. Resources are chosen carefully to reflect cultural diversity and ensure that all children have equal access to the whole curriculum. Provision for children with additional needs is carefully targeted, mainly within the classroom, to ensure that those with SEND or EAL receive the help they need to achieve the expected levels of development.

Respect and tolerance of others are actively promoted within the EYFS through simple class rules and staff acting as excellent role models. Staff are acutely aware of the need to adhere strictly to all welfare and child protection policies. Regular training is provided for safeguarding, health and safety procedures, and strategies for preventing radicalisation and extremism. As a result, arrangements for safeguarding children are highly effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

Staff are well qualified and have a comprehensive understanding of the EYFS and how children learn. Staff respond positively to children's explorations and are highly adept at developing children's self-initiated activities to draw out the learning potential. High expectations of what children can achieve are reflected in the flexible planning and open-ended challenges provided for all ages. Enthusiastic and supportive staff skilfully extend and develop the experiences of the youngest children, resulting in confident, independent learners who readily express their ideas and needs through early words and gestures.

Staff regularly introduce additional resources to extend children's learning. In the best examples of teaching, children's learning is extended very effectively through the excellent use of probing questions that promote imagination and problem solving. On a few occasions an emphasis on closed questions limits the opportunity for children to think creatively. Very occasionally, a lack of subject knowledge and the slow pace of activities inhibit the effectiveness of the support provided for children. On these occasions, children's progress is slower. Specialist staff provide excellent guidance and support for children and EYFS staff, for example during activities in the woodland classroom.

A detailed 'All About Me' booklet allows parents to offer insight into their children's development. Observations completed by staff soon after a child joins the Nursery also provide an accurate point from which to track development. Ongoing assessment is thorough, reflective and used extremely well to track children's progress. Regular observations similarly allow staff to track progress and are used effectively to plan next steps in children's learning. Planning is highly effective in meeting the needs of individuals and groups. Staff skilfully adapt planning to reflect children's responses to their experiences.

An excellent balance of support and challenge, introduced through a wide variety of adult-initiated and child-directed activities, allows every child to make rapid progress. Children become independent and active learners due to the high-quality guidance and support provided by staff through challenges, open-ended questioning and engagement in children's pretend play.

Parents are well informed about their children's progress and have opportunities to attend curriculum workshops and information evenings about how to support learning at home. For the youngest children, detailed information on food intake, nappy changes and sleep is provided daily. Parents regularly view and contribute to their children's records, known as 'Learning Journeys'. For older children, regular reports provide a detailed account of progress and, in the best examples, a clear indication of next steps. Progress checks at two years of age, and end of foundation stage reports provide a comprehensive summary of children's development in relation to the expected levels for their age.

A wide range of festivals are celebrated throughout the year and helps children to understand and respect cultural diversity and individual differences. Great care is taken at all stages of their development to prepare children for the transition to the next stage of their learning. Taster sessions are provided before children move up to the next class, and careful consideration is afforded to the grouping of children as they move into Reception. Children moving to or arriving from other settings are equally well prepared for their transitions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding.

Children are confident, independent learners who relish the opportunities provided both indoors and outside. Throughout the EYFS a positive attitude pervades. Classrooms are stimulating and richly resourced; themes reflect and develop from the children's own interests and ideas; and staff are highly adept at extracting the learning potential from the children's self-initiated activities. As a result, children develop a positive attitude to learning and confidence in their own ability.

From a young age, children display curiosity and determination as they discover what they can do with the objects around them. They enjoy coming to school and approach every activity with enthusiasm.

Staff are sensitive to children's emotional needs, particularly at times of transition from one stage of learning to the next. An effective key person system is in place which ensures that every child has a special adult to whom they can turn if in need of reassurance. Personal care is sensitively matched to children's individual needs and routines.

Throughout the EYFS, children's physical and emotional well-being is carefully assured. Registers are completed in a timely and robust manner, with any unexpected absence investigated promptly to ensure regular attendance.

Children play imaginatively and co-operatively. They understand how to behave appropriately in different situations, such as when in the woodland classroom or during assemblies. Children work exceptionally well in small groups to achieve a common goal. They share their ideas and learn effectively from each other, for example as they design and build dens from sticks, leaves and grass.

Children demonstrate consideration for others and have a secure understanding of how to behave in ways that are safe. From a young age they become familiar with a range of information and communication technology (ICT), including programmable toys and touch-screen computers. Staff provide age-appropriate guidance on using ICT safely.

Children enjoy the freshly prepared lunches, which encourage healthy eating, and willingly try unfamiliar food. They understand the importance of personal hygiene. As a result of the excellent support and guidance from the adults who care for them, children are well prepared to respect others and to make a positive contribution to wider society.

Outcomes for children

Outcomes for children are outstanding.

All children make excellent, continuous progress in relation to their individual starting points and capabilities due to the nurturing and supportive environment that recognises each child as an individual. In the Day Nursery, babies become increasingly mobile as they explore the stimulating environment to shake sound bottles or to roll and chase a ball. Older children run, propel ride-on toys and negotiate obstacles with confidence and agility in the well-planned outdoor areas.

Children become confident communicators who use language effectively, drawing upon their previous experiences to enhance their imaginative play. In the Nursery, children begin to relate numbers and quantities through matching games and classroom displays, and they use their well-developed imaginations to produce artistic responses to stories. In Reception, children use their secure knowledge of the elements of a sentence to produce excellent pieces of independent, creative writing based on familiar stories. In mathematics, they recognise and name three-dimensional shapes from descriptions provided by their teacher, and excellent problem-solving skills were demonstrated when they used bamboo canes to make a triangular prism.

Children demonstrate extensive knowledge of the natural world. For example the Nursery children were able to describe the life cycle of a butterfly using appropriate terminology, and those in Reception named different plants and mini-beasts during a visit to the woodland classroom. Children at all stages of the EYFS meet or exceed levels of development typical for their age. As a result, by the end of the foundation stage almost all children achieve and frequently exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning and development.

Compliance with statutory requirements

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Identify and share the most effective practice within the EYFS to ensure that all teaching is of the same high standard.

About the inspection

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

Inspectors

Mrs Jane Chesterfield	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Clare Lynas	Compliance Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)
Mr Chris Manville	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years