



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**BEECH HALL SCHOOL**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Beech Hall School

Full Name of School	<b>Beech Hall School</b>
DfE Number	<b>875/6008</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY304971</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>878481</b>
Address	<b>Beech Hall School Beech Hall Drive Tytherington Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 2EG</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01625 422192</b>
Fax Number	<b>01625 502424</b>
Email Address	<b>head_beechhall@yahoo.co.uk</b>
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Geraldine Yandell</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Jean Oldbury</b>
Age Range	<b>0 to 16</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>192</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (111 boys; 81 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>54</b> 5-11: <b>43</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>33</b> 11-18: <b>62</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Susannah Middleton</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>27 Jan 2015 to 28 Jan 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 inspection was in January 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 the chair of governors and attended registration sessions. 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 Carol Berrie

Team Inspector for Early Years  
(Head of Pre-prep, ISA school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Beech Hall is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from 6 months to 16 years. The school aims to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning within small classes, and to ensure that pupils gain an all-round education within a stimulating and supportive environment. It seeks for them to develop a sense of direction and purpose, whilst seeking to foster independence, tolerance and adaptability. The school was founded in 1926 as a preparatory boarding school for boys. Girls were admitted to the school in 1981 and the Nursery was opened in 1993. Originally privately owned, the school has been administered by a limited company and charitable trust since 1966. The school is overseen by an elected board of governors, consisting of a chair of governors and six additional governors, each with a particular responsibility within the school, including one governor who oversees the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is situated in 16 acres of parkland on the outskirts of the town of Macclesfield in Cheshire.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, several areas of the school have been refurbished, a new chair of governors has been elected and the oldest Nursery class has moved from the Nursery building into the main school, near to the Reception class.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the number of pupils on roll was 192. Of these, 111 were boys and 81 were girls. This includes 87 in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with 76 attending part-time, and 105 in the main school. None of the EYFS children has been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities or has a statement of special educational needs, and an extremely small proportion of children are learning English as an additional language.
- 1.4 Most pupils live locally and a small number travel from Greater Manchester and other parts of Cheshire. The majority of pupils' parents work in professional or business occupations. Pupils are predominantly of white British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and from a range of European countries.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

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

School	NC name
Elm Room	Nursery (6 months to 18 months)
Oak Room	Nursery (18 months to 2 years, 3 months)
Yew Room	Nursery (2 years, 3 months to 3 years)
Ash Room	Nursery (3 years to 3 years, 8 months)
Pre-School	Nursery (3 years, 8 months to 4 years)
Reception	Reception

## **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.
1. Enhance the Nursery's outdoor provision to foster exploration and investigation.

### **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 those under three, to reach their full potential. This strong provision supports children who have been identified as learning English as an additional language in their acquisition of linguistic skills.
- 3.2 Caring and supportive staff have successfully created a homely and nurturing environment where children can achieve at a high standard, in line with the school's values and ethos. Assessment is accurate and is used perceptively 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 range of timetabled, structured activities, including literacy and numeracy. They provide many indoor exploration and investigation experiences, particularly during sensory-based activities; for example, the younger Nursery children handled frozen peas and dried pasta. For the Nursery children, the use of the outdoors is not fully productive. The older Nursery children have interesting and challenging activities to develop their language skills; for example, during a story they were learning new words to identify wild animals, such as beavers, woodpeckers, stags and fawns.
- 3.4 Staff make learning enjoyable, as observed in joint activities for the oldest Nursery children and Reception. Children particularly enjoyed a specialist French lesson based on a favourite story, which included singing and games, further supported by the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Reception children enjoyed an assembly with older children, when they were involved in a 'sign2sing' session involving sign language through music. All children respond eagerly to the staff's high expectations of them, and are enthusiastic and motivated learners.
- 3.5 Staff have established excellent partnerships with children's parents and carers, as seen in the overall positive responses to the pre-inspection parental questionnaire. Parents particularly appreciate the small class sizes and how their children are treated as individuals, the school's regular and informative communication with them, the nurturing and homely environment that has been created and how perceptively staff know their children. In addition, parents commented on how they are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, both at home and in the setting, all having a positive impact on the settling-in process.
- 3.6 Staff 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 careful tracking of next steps in their learning. Before- and after-school care and activities are available to the EYFS children, providing wrap-around provision which is welcomed by parents.



### **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. Members of staff are caring and supportive, particularly assisting the youngest children and, as a result, children form secure emotional attachments with adults. All EYFS staff work closely together to ensure that smooth transitions take place, for example from the younger to the older Nursery classes, from the oldest Nursery class to Reception and from Reception to Year 1. At all levels, staff ensure that they share developmental information about each child, enabling them to be aware of children's individual needs and starting points.
- 3.8 Key people have established excellent relationships with children, and this has a positive impact on meeting their educational and welfare needs. Children feel secure and display a high level of confidence; they are happy and enjoy what they do. They are able to work independently, co-operate with each other and frequently use their imagination. They are encouraged to celebrate a wide range of festivals, such as Chinese New Year, especially through high quality creative activities. The awareness of the oldest Nursery children and those in Reception of the need for physical exercise is enhanced through joint creative dancing lessons, and through sporting activities in the school's main hall. They learn about the importance of healthy eating, such as during lunchtime and snack routines when they are expected to make healthy choices, and are frequently encouraged to eat fresh fruit. Children understand the importance of washing their hands after going to the toilet, and those older are familiar with the routine of washing their faces after lunch, including looking in a mirror to check that they are clean.

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

- 3.9 Leadership and management are outstanding. Aspirations are extremely high and a clear vision is communicated particularly well by the EYFS leadership, enabling staff to share and develop their secure practice within the school. Effective teamwork contributes greatly to the progress and development of all children.
- 3.10 Members of the governing board are involved in the work of the EYFS, including a recently appointed EYFS 'link governor'. This appointment has had a positive impact on the overall provision, particularly the decision to move the oldest Nursery class back into the main school building to enable stronger links with Reception. All responsibilities are undertaken appropriately. Arrangements promote a purposeful and inclusive atmosphere in which children thrive. The children's well-being and safeguarding are a central focus of the school, enhanced through comprehensive risk assessments, and a genuine concern for the welfare and personal development of children. Senior staff evaluate and monitor the educational programmes and other provision on a regular basis. An accurate self-evaluation provides a secure basis for planning the school's development; for example, the EYFS self-evaluation form sets out clear aims and required actions. The setting had previously identified as an area for improvement enhancement of the Nursery outdoor provision.
- 3.11 Excellent partnerships have been established with parents, and the school welcomes children from nearby early years settings to participate in activities, such as French lessons, all contributing significantly to improving outcomes for the children. There are plans to make fuller use of the wooded area near to the Nursery block, to enable the Nursery children to experience a wider range of outdoor exploration and investigation activities. 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 identifies accurately staff's individual strengths, and encourages the development of their knowledge and understanding through, for example, their pursuit of higher qualifications.

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

- 3.12 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. The children's achievements and progress greatly exceed age-related expectations in all areas of learning in relation to their various starting points. Physical development is strongly promoted for those under three, such as through skilfully manoeuvring large wheeled toys. Older Nursery children are highly successful in developing varied speaking and listening skills, for example during 'circle time', when they frequently share their news, at snack times and in focused 'letters and sounds' activities.
- 3.13 The oldest Nursery children and those in Reception demonstrate a high level of aptitude at blending letter sounds to build words during a variety of well-planned activities. These skills are further enhanced through daily reading practice in school and at home. Children are able to identify and recognise numbers up to 10, as demonstrated when they accurately used their 'number fans'. Many of the older children are able to recognise numbers up to 20. They can count everyday objects, such as buns, when singing their favourite songs, and can use positional mathematical language, for example 'under' and 'behind'. Children learn skills for the future by operating a suitable range of ICT equipment, for example when using the interactive whiteboard to consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills. The specialist French teaching contributes positively to outcomes for children.
- 3.14 The teaching and care provided by key people ensure that all of the children's needs are identified and met. These are highlighted purposefully through the staff's detailed evaluation and planning processes, and also through high quality interactions with the children. Staff are highly effective in meeting the needs of those learning English as an additional language, particularly through working in close partnership with their parents.
- 3.15 All children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered notably well through their positive interactions with the caring and supportive staff. Children develop a sensitivity to others through a wide range of fund-raising events, including a special day to support a medical charity. They display exemplary behaviour, they are courteous and respectful towards each other, visitors and staff, and they know how to stay safe. They take delight in receiving praise through a wide variety of rewards for their behaviour and work, as seen during focused activities in the Reception class.
- 3.16 Excellent leadership and management ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Since the previous inspection, the setting has responded effectively to the recommendations made at that time. These included seeking to reduce the workload of senior managers so that monitoring of the curriculum and all other aspects of school life could be more evenly rigorous, and to develop the school improvement plan to include input from the whole school community, whilst detailing financial implications and indicating how priorities were to be achieved.