



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT

PILGRIMS PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL

JUNE 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School			
DfE number	822/6010			
Registered charity number	1066861			
Address	Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School Brickhill Drive Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 7QZ			
Telephone number	01234 369555			
Email address	enquiries@pilgrims-school.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Webster			
Chair of governors	Mrs Sue Clark			
Age range	3 months to 7 years			
Number of pupils on roll	349			
	Boys	176	Girls	173
	EYFS	235	Key stage 1	114
Inspection dates	20 to 21 June 2018			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between three months and seven years. It is owned and managed by The Harpur Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee. Day-to-day management is overseen by a board of governors, known as the School Committee. The school opened in January 2000 and is organised into two sections: Little Pilgrims and Pre-School for babies and children under four; and Main School for children aged four to seven years. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced the role of link governor for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to inspire each child to love learning, whilst engaging with the wider community and the world beyond. By providing a safe and happy environment full of rich and challenging opportunities and innovative teaching, the school seeks to motivate each child to discover their full potential, whilst recognising and supporting individual needs. Underpinning the school's aims are the three values of curiosity, kindness and respect.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from professional families living locally or within a 30-minute commute, mostly of white British ethnicity. A small proportion are drawn from a range of other nationalities and cultures. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 35 pupils as having additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include speech and communication, cognition and learning. Also, one pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 13 pupils, whose needs are supported by specialist or classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 90 pupils as the most able in the school population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 52 pupils due to their talents in sport, music and art.

2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

Preface

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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection 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 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 identified at their previous inspection.

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

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.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 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

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 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 pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy 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.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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. They also include 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 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.

2.18 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

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.20 All children in the registered setting make excellent progress relative to their individual starting points, as a result of the excellent educational experiences and exceptional care provided. Skilled practitioners with a strong knowledge of children's development are able to assess the children in their care, so that they can provide a range of learning activities which ensure rapid progress and effective preparation for the next stage of education. This thorough assessment also enables adults to identify children who are not developing appropriately and put in place effective strategies that enable all children, including those with SEND or EAL, to make excellent progress. Children's personal development is outstanding. They are clearly happy, secure and strong, warm relationships are apparent. All safeguarding requirements are fully met and all adults share a strong understanding of their responsibilities in this area. The knowledgeable leadership are rigorous in their evaluation of practice and strongly committed to further improvement.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.21 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.22 Leaders and managers are successful at embedding a culture of high aspiration for the development and achievements of the children in their care. They are equally rigorous and ambitious in enabling the staff to achieve these aims. Leaders actively seek out suggestions for improving practice from professional associations, journals, exhibitions and local authority advisors. Professional development, including supervision and performance management, is extremely successful in improving staff practice. Staff speak highly of the many opportunities they are offered for professional development. This encouragement, particularly of room leaders, has led to highly effective initiatives in areas such as health and welfare, including Healthy Heart Week, as well as curriculum innovations in fine and gross-motor skills as preparation for handwriting, mathematics and music. Staff from the early years setting are included on whole-school committees such as the Well-being Committee, and they appreciate this recognition of the importance of their department.
- 2.23 These initiatives, building on the already strong provision, contribute to a curriculum which covers all the relevant areas and offers an exciting range of experiences for the children, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. For the youngest children the curriculum focuses on personal, social and emotional, physical and language development, providing a strong basis for future progress. The views of even the youngest children are taken note of in planning, and interests and enthusiasms are incorporated into the provision.
- 2.24 A scrupulous system of self-evaluation is in place, taking careful account of the views of parents. Such evaluation ensures that provision and delivery is continuously monitored in order to sustain the high standards evident in the setting. This is well supported by governance which takes a keen interest in the setting and provides strong oversight of policies. Governors recently undertook a curriculum learning walk to report on the development of handwriting from the youngest children upwards, focusing on the development of motor skills through activities such as threading beads and mark-making in the early years. Governors provide ongoing support to ensure continuous improvement of the facilities, resulting in the provision of spacious well-equipped rooms and exciting and stimulating outdoor areas. This enables all children to explore and develop their skills and interests.

- 2.25 Leaders are actively committed to promoting equality and diversity, and have recently strengthened the resources for these areas with the purchase of more multi-ethnic dolls and dressing-up clothes. A variety of festivals are celebrated at the appropriate times of year such as Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year. Staff act in an exemplary manner and are highly effective role models for behaviour and mutual respect. Leadership and management ensure that rigorous attention is paid to all aspects of safeguarding including meticulous record-keeping, and training for all staff in being aware of the possibility of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.26 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 2.27 Staff are strongly committed to the well-being and development of the children in their care. All children, including those with EAL or SEND, make excellent progress relative to their starting points due to the excellent planning, preparation and assessment evident throughout the setting. Leadership and management have embedded a culture of high expectations for all children. Adults have a thorough, detailed knowledge of the children and their expected development, and this understanding enables staff to be alert to anything that might delay a child's progress. Thorough observations by key people, room staff and the supportive management, together with close liaison with parents, are used to suggest strategies, including those involving relevant professionals such as speech and language therapists, if required. Excellent initiatives, such as training staff to deliver an age-appropriate language acquisition programme provide support for children at a key stage of their language development. Staff are highly aware of the importance of parents in their children's development and a recent parents' information evening on language included speakers such as a speech and language therapist. Commitment by the staff to continuous professional development facilitates the development of all children and helps them to acquire the skills for the next stage of their learning.
- 2.28 Detailed planning that responds to children's needs and interests provides rich and varied experiences to engage and motivate the children. Staff, particularly in the baby room, have used natural resources such as bamboo and timber to provide high-quality tactile toys and musical instruments that the children use with enthusiasm. Older children, whilst having excellent resources made from man-made materials, do not have the benefit of regularly using resources made from natural materials, enabling them to develop greater knowledge and appreciation of ecologically sustainable products. Children are able to suggest themes for activities or songs to sing, and adults respond positively. Staff are skilled at using parents as a resource to support and interest the children, such as inviting a dentist to visit and talk about their work, providing inspiration for an exciting role play area.
- 2.29 Children are able to choose freely from a range of interesting activities both inside and outdoors. Carefully planned choices that develop language and other skills are provided, and their impact on the children is closely observed and evaluated. Detailed records, linked to the early years development goals, show progress and development. These are available for parents to view, and they are encouraged to contribute their own observations on paper slips which record new developments they have observed at home, known as 'Wow' moments. The rooms are organised to encourage independence with attractive, accessible furniture and equipment that enable children to feed themselves and exercise choice in many areas. Staff are proficient at responding to children's needs, even to the youngest who are only just learning to express themselves verbally. Adults regularly read to the children, sometimes individually, and provide highly effective conversational and speech modelling.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.30 The personal development behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.31 Children's personal and emotional development is excellent. They are secure and confident, particularly with their key people, and even the very youngest children are very happy and engaged. Crying is extremely rare and only lasts a few seconds due to the close attention and warmth of the response given by staff. Prompt and regular attendance is evident and children who are slightly late are warmly welcomed and quickly integrate into the setting.
- 2.32 Independence is fostered by allowing children to choose from a range of stimulating, purposeful activities. Children are encouraged to share toys and activities with their friends and receive praise for doing so. Opportunities to develop the imagination through sensory and tactile exploration feature highly with the youngest children, and interesting resources such as a colourful bubble lamp in the baby room encourage children to vocalise and expand their growing vocabulary. The school values of curiosity, kindness and respect are embedded throughout the setting, explicitly referred to in planning and reflected in the activities provided. British values are a feature of displays in the rooms, and in-service training has covered how these are interpreted in the early years. These values are linked to strong policies on promoting positive behaviour and appreciation of the individuality of the children. This was observed when children contributed their views in discussion of the story of The Ugly Duckling, understanding this as an example of respecting and valuing difference in others.
- 2.33 The staff are skilled at directing children to make good choices during meal times and when playing. A variety of high-quality food options are provided, and children are encouraged to try different foods at mealtimes and for snacks, so even the youngest are learning to select. They come to know what it means to eat healthily and to understand basic hygiene of why it is important to wash their hands before eating.
- 2.34 Staff throughout the school have an excellent understanding of how to keep children safe and what is required for their welfare. Outdoor and indoor areas are inspected for safety on a daily basis using a comprehensive checklist. Areas used by the youngest children are fenced off from the larger garden so they can be kept safe while still enjoying exploring and learning outside. Continuous training, including an understanding of theory as well as its practical application, and regular updates mean that all staff involved share the responsibility for protecting the children in their care.
- 2.35 The warm, secure relationships children of all ages have with their key workers and other adults in the setting enable them to take part confidently in more physically demanding activities, such climbing on large equipment in the hall, exploring the large apparatus outside and swimming. Staff support the children in taking measured physical risks so that they acquire new skills and a growing understanding of what their bodies can do. Familiarity with other adults across the setting and close consultation with parents enables staff to effect a seamless transition for children as they move to the next room for their age group.

Outcomes for children

2.36 Outcomes for children are outstanding.

2.37 All children progress extremely well from their different starting points, including those with SEND or EAL. Supported by their key workers and all adults in the setting, they are happy, active and engaged as they choose from a wide range of well-planned stimulating activities. They become familiar with and relate well to other children and adults in the shared outdoor areas and enjoy being visited by their older friends and siblings. Children quickly learn how they can contribute to the happiness and well-being of others by the strong emphasis placed on sharing. Babies engage well with adults in singing and other musical activities; even the youngest children are included in events such as a concert that took place during the inspection, during which they showed their enjoyment by clapping and listening intently. Toddlers can feed themselves and are aware of their own hygiene needs. An emphasis on developing communication skills, physical skills and independence ensures that children make excellent progress, are exceptionally confident and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Compliance with statutory requirements

2.38 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.

- Extend the use of natural resources, such as wood and natural fabrics, for children of all ages so they develop a greater knowledge and appreciation of natural products.

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff, the chair of governors and the EYFS governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Dr Wendy Bowring	Reporting inspector
Mr James Bishop	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, IAPS school)
Mrs Eithne Webster	Co-ordinating inspector for early years
Mrs Tessa Richardson	Team inspector for early years (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)