



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

GREENBANK PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Greenbank Preparatory School

Full Name of School	Greenbank Preparatory School		
DfE Number	356/6005		
EYFS Number	EY287053.		
Registered Charity Number	525930		
Address	Greenbank Preparatory School Heathbank Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6HU		
Telephone Number	01614 853724		
Fax Number	01614 855519		
Email Address	headmistress@greenbankschool.co.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs Janet Lowe		
Chair of Governors	Mr John Kennedy		
Age Range	6 months to 11 years		
Total Number of Pupils	273		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (162 boys; 111 girls;)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	57	5-11: 132
	3-5 (EYFS):	84	11-18: 0
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	273	
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	21 June 2011 to 22 June 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in April, 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

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 31st 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 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, though inspectors will 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.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Greenbank Preparatory School aims to educate the pupils in the fullest sense so that they begin to realise their academic and personal potential; to create a happy and caring environment within which pupils can develop a sense of personal worth; to develop a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong and respect for others; to make a worthwhile contribution to the community; to develop initiative, confidence, independence and self-discipline. Founded in 1951, the school is a charitable trust with a chairman and board of trustees. It is located in the residential area of Cheadle Hulme, from which it draws many of its pupils, the remainder coming mainly from surrounding villages. The majority of parents are from a professional background; a few pupils come from ethnic minorities.
- 1.2 The school is co-educational and takes 273 children from six months to eleven years of age. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has 141 children, 81 boys and 60 girls, of whom 84 are aged three or over. The Day Nursery takes children from six months to school age but those children who will be staying after age five transfer at age three to a separate pre-school class. In Year 1 to Year 6, there are 132 pupils, 81 boys and 51 girls.
- 1.3 Since the previous report, the school has had a new headmistress and head of infants, new art, science and music rooms, and now provides school meals. The school is non-selective and the ability profile of the school is above the national average. The school provides additional learning support to fourteen pupils but has no pupils with statements of special educational need or needing support for English as an additional language.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills is good and the school fulfils its aim to educate the pupils in the fullest sense so that they begin to realize their academic and personal potential.
- 2.2 Pupils are articulate and confident and express themselves well. They write fluently: Year 2 pupils produced some polished, continuous prose with good use of well-chosen vocabulary. Pupils achieve good standards in listening and reading throughout the school, and examples of good creative writing are on display in many areas. Mathematics standards of achievement throughout the school are high and logical thought processes are demonstrated both in mathematics lessons and elsewhere in the curriculum at all ages. Older pupils take part in linguistic and UK mathematics challenges and frequently reach the finals. Pupils entered for music and dramatic art examinations achieve good results and a number of distinctions. High standards achieved in physical education (PE) lessons are carried forward into fixtures, where great enthusiasm is shown.
- 2.3 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. The curriculum is wide and balanced and includes timetabled French, German and Spanish, while Latin is more briefly introduced. Pupils are enthusiastic and display high standards in their use of information and computer technology (ICT) in designated ICT lessons, but it is insufficiently used to enhance learning in other subjects. A good range of extra-curricular activities encourages pupils to participate fully and to enjoy the experience. Good, and sometimes excellent, teaching encourages focus, application and very good behaviour. In the best lessons, brisk pace, variety of activities and focus on individuals resulted in high standards of work. In Year 5, pupils of differing abilities were all suitably challenged whilst considering and composing different story openings. Standardised assessments are used to identify pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and these pupils are well supported within lessons, although liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator and subject staff is not always sufficiently coordinated. Pupils who are gifted and talented are identified and various activities are provided for them but lesson planning does not sufficiently acknowledge their different needs through provision of appropriate tasks. Marking is regularly monitored by subject coordinators and, in the best examples, recognises achievement and sets targets.
- 2.4 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They listen attentively and are keen to do well. They are enthusiastic and respond positively. In a performance of *The Wizard of Oz*, pupils showed sustained concentration and worked very well together. In a Year 3 PE lesson, the pupils were fully engaged and learning from one another as they took it in turns to demonstrate examples of good practice. In an ICT lesson in Year 4, pupils were fully engaged in independent research that culminated in their presentation of their findings to the rest of the class. Excellent displays of art and creative work are evident throughout the school.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.5 The personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are polite and courteous and display respect and regard for one another. They have a strong sense of what is right and wrong and are aware of those less fortunate than themselves. Their social conscience and spiritual awareness were displayed through their involvement and fund-raising for Port Reitz, a school for pupils with disabilities in Kenya, where they formed strong international links with the pupils and raised over £5,000 in aid. The pupils take their roles as responsible citizens very seriously and are active in their commitment to the environment through regular Eco meetings that are reported back to, and involve, the entire school. Pupils display a great sense of pride in their school's involvement in the conservation of the environment, and they learn of the implications of conservation for the community and wider world. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of all lessons are monitored closely by the deputy head. Pupils are aware of different cultures through their personal, health and social education (PHSE) lessons and are respectful of different faiths. The wide range of school visits enhances and broadens their experiences. Pupils learn about their country's institutions and their rights and responsibilities and last year during the general election, the older pupils devised their own mock election.
- 2.6 The pastoral care of the pupils is excellent. They feel safe in school and are happy. They are comfortable to approach their teacher if they are worried or to write a note to the headmistress and post it in the 'listening ear' box. Pupils did not see any problem with bullying at the school and said that their teachers were effective in dealing with any instances of unkindness. They describe their school as being a place where all pupils are nice to one another. Anti-bullying posters are visible on display, and circle time and PHSE lessons deal very thoroughly with anti-bullying strategies.
- 2.7 The pupils' welfare, and health and safety has a high priority, and policies and practice ensure an environment in which pupils feel secure, well cared for and happy. The school has a range of effective policies, which include one for the reduction of fire risk, and risk assessment for school trips. Fire practices are held regularly and appropriately logged, electrical equipment is inspected and tested as required and the buildings are kept as risk free as possible. Staff are trained in safeguarding pupils' welfare, they receive child protection training at appropriate intervals and first-aid training. The school has an appropriate medical room, and accidents and treatment are fully logged. Hot meals are provided, and enable pupils to choose healthy eating options.
- 2.8 Attendance and admission registers are properly kept and archived, and the school's Special Educational Need Disability Access policy complies with requirements.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.9 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management overall is excellent. Trustees ensure that the school is run in accordance with its aim to realise the academic and personal potential of each child. They meet every month, and since they do not have sub-committees, all trustees are fully involved in all their discussions. They attend various school functions and have detailed knowledge of the school that enables them fully to understand its workings. One of the trustees is responsible for overseeing child protection issues, and another who is a health and safety expert looks after this area. They also have a trustee appointed to be treasurer, who works closely with the school's business manager to ensure that all financial affairs are fully in order. The school's development plan is carefully costed, and trustees fulfil their responsibility to ensure the adequacy of both human and material resources. Procedures for ensuring safe recruitment are all in place, and the efficiency with which child protection policies operate is reviewed annually.
- 2.10 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The school is led with a clear vision which is well communicated to staff, who, in turn, give the pupils a strong sense of purpose, exemplified in their excellent charity work and concern for the environment. The structure of the senior leadership team is able to cover all areas of school life and thus provides consistent leadership across all areas. The role of the school's subject leaders has been strengthened, and further development of this area is now being planned. Staff appraisal and peer observation take place, and managers monitor the work of the pupils on a weekly basis. Professional development is well supported by the school's leadership. The central register of appointments is kept correctly, showing the necessary checks on the suitability of staff and governors.
- 2.11 The premises are clean and tidy, and well maintained. The business manager and the maintenance staff have a regular itinerary of health and safety checks around the buildings. Classrooms are attractive, with some excellent displays of artwork and other examples of pupils' achievements. The rooms are well resourced, and have a cheerful ambience.
- 2.12 Parents have excellent links with the school; they are encouraged to speak to staff when they collect and deliver their children and the headmistress makes a point of being available at this time. Reports to parents and parent evenings all contribute to good communication, further enhanced by the good quality of all the necessary information sent to parents. In their questionnaire, parents commented very enthusiastically on the school; in particular they noted the good quality of communication with the school, the appropriate curriculum, the help and guidance given to pupils and the quality of the attitudes and values the school promotes. Inspectors agreed with all these views. A very few parents were unhappy with the information they are given about their children's progress, but inspectors found no evidence to support this view. The school has a robust complaints policy which fully meets requirements.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 3.2 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - 1. Further develop the use of ICT in the wider setting of the school.
 - 2. Undertake more rigorous monitoring of the EYFS setting, with a focus on setting priorities for improvement and providing a more cohesive approach to planning and the development of policies and procedures.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good with some outstanding features, including the care of the children, the outcomes for the oldest children, and links with parents. Children are safeguarded effectively; they achieve well and make good or outstanding progress. The leadership and management is good overall. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed. However, the absence of an overall leader reduces the effectiveness of communication across the setting and limits opportunities for review, evaluation and development planning.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.2 Leadership and management are good overall in each section. Children's health, safety and well-being are given high priority and enhanced by the consistent implementation of suitable policies and procedures. The setting promotes equality and the achievement of all children satisfactorily. Resources are used creatively to promote learning. Parents have good opportunities to engage in their children's learning, and are very supportive of the school. Links with the local authority, the school and other providers contribute to smooth transitions at every level. The separate management structures within the setting limit the effectiveness of communication. Weaknesses in planning arise from the split-site arrangements, particularly the daily planning for the two pre-school parallel groups who come together in the afternoon. Plans are in place to improve the coordination of the provision, but are not sufficiently informed by systematic monitoring and evaluation.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.3 Provision for the learning, development and welfare of children including those who are under three is good overall. Outdoor facilities for the day Nursery are outstanding and used well to promote children's learning and development. Those children who will stay on at the school after the age of five are accommodated in a separate block next to the Reception class, with whom they share outdoor facilities and benefit from daily contact with older children. In most lessons, staff provide interesting and varied learning opportunities for children, based on good assessments and their individual needs and interests. However, because this practice is not consistently applied, some children do not make as much progress as might be expected. An appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities is a feature of most lessons. Staff are vigilant in their care of children, and they help them develop safe and healthy habits and to behave well. Assessments are increasingly being used to set the next steps in learning for individual children. The children's educational experiences are enhanced by the many visitors to the settings and visits off site.

4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.4 The outcomes for the children including those who are under three are good and by the end of Reception outcomes are outstanding. Children enjoy their time in the setting. They develop good social and communication skills from an early age by listening to stories and songs, and by interacting with adults. Their co-ordination skills and skills of enquiry are developed well by exploring different objects and materials, including materials from the gardens. Children increase their knowledge and understanding of the world by learning about people who help. Older children demonstrate very good levels of independence by dressing themselves and taking responsibility for their own possessions. They understand the need to wash their hands, make healthy choices at mealtimes and take regular exercise. They feel safe because they receive reassurance and encouragement from the staff. The Reception children demonstrate proficiency in reading, early writing, number and ICT and all exceed the goals expected for that age in all areas of learning.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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

Complaints since the last inspection

- 4.6 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Jenny McCallum

Mrs Anna Evans

Ms Sheila Boyle

Reporting Inspector

Headmistress of an ISA prep school

Early Years Lead Inspector