



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

COPTHORNE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Copthorne Preparatory School
DfE Number	936/6438
EYFS Number	EY288842
Registered Charity Number	270757
Address	Copthorne Preparatory School Effingham Lane Copthorne Crawley West Sussex RH10 3HR
Telephone Number	01342 712311
Fax Number	01342 714014
Email Address	office@copthorneprep.co.uk
Head	Mr Christopher Jones
Chair of Governors	Mr James Abdool
Age Range	2½ to 13
Total Number of Pupils	354
Gender of Pupils	Mixed
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 237 3-5 (EYFS): 63 11-13: 54
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Susan Swadling
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	09 Oct 2012 to 10 Oct 2012

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 November 2009.

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, 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

Mrs Kathy McLauchlan

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Helen Dalkin

Team Inspector for Early Years
(Head of Pre-Prep Department, IAPS school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Copthorne Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of two and a half and thirteen. It was founded in 1902 as a boarding school for boys and now retains its boarding facilities for flexible boarding. The school aims to develop its pupils' confidence and raise their self-esteem through success across the full range of school activities, embracing the whole child and not only in the academic curriculum. The school has a governing body.
- 1.2 The school is based in a Victorian house with modern additional buildings. It is set in extensive grounds, including woodland, on the outskirts of Crawley. There are 354 pupils on roll. The registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting is an integral part of the school, educating 63 children in total. Children aged two to four are catered for in three Nursery classes, and attend on a flexible, part-time basis. The Pre-prep, for pupils aged four to seven, accommodates three Reception classes for those aged four to five, who attend full-time. The Nursery and Pre-prep have their own play areas and equipment, and use of the wider facilities that include the chapel, a swimming pool, a small theatre, a sports hall and music rooms.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, under a new senior leadership team, many changes have taken place. The Pre-prep and Nursery now have outdoor play facilities, a woodland adventure area, interactive whiteboards, programmable toys and a new computer suite.
- 1.4 The school has identified two children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three children have English as an additional language (EAL) and these children receive a taught programme of support.
- 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 National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
The Coach House	Nursery
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) Recommendations for further improvement

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Provide cosy corners and restful spaces for children under three.
2. Develop staff supervision and support through a formalised system and programme of coaching and peer mentoring.

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 children who attend. Programmes and activities have depth and breadth across the EYFS; providing interesting and challenging experiences that meet the needs of all children. Reception children practise their letters and sounds; they search for letters in messy gel. Children under three search for 'minibeasts' in the woodland area and explore the colours of autumn, whilst children over three make sock puppets and write letters using interactive whiteboards and computers.
- 3.2 Practitioners have high expectations of themselves and the children, and are very knowledgeable about the learning areas of the EYFS. Children under three are given many experiences that encourage communication skills to develop, and high priority is given to the inclusion of children with EAL. Staff assessment and monitoring procedures are excellent, informative and used to plan next steps, as evidenced in developmental profiles, ensuring that all children achieve their potential.
- 3.3 Staff strongly promote excellent core values so that all children are highly motivated, confident and eager to participate, and consistently demonstrate characteristics of effective learning. All children make rapid progress from their starting points. The sharp focus on helping them to acquire communication and language skills means that children under three are skilled communicators and participators in all areas of the curriculum. Children over three are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- 3.4 Parents are successfully engaged in their children's learning. They volunteer to read stories to the Nursery and attend workshops on sounds and letters. Staff form strong relationships with parents, and keep them informed about their children's achievement and progress. Parents responded extremely positively in their questionnaire regarding all aspects of the setting. In particular, they value the cultural diversity of the setting, the relaxed and happy environment and the opportunity to participate in their children's learning.

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

- 3.5 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is outstanding. Robust policies ensure that every child is safe, and the consistent application of similar routines and practices throughout the setting allows children to maintain their own safety and that of others. In turn, these factors enable the children to manage risk at an age-appropriate level. The key person role is particularly well executed in the Nursery. Staff ensure that the needs of the youngest children are met, and that parents are informed about their children's day either through handover or use of a message book. However, a cosy corner in which young children can choose to rest is not yet in place. The children's behaviour is outstanding. The setting has an excellent range of physically demanding equipment and staff carefully plan activities. This provides children with opportunities for enriching language skills and purposeful play that develops physical independence, imagination and exploration. Discipline, when required, is fair, firm and discreet.
- 3.6 Children are regularly reminded about hygiene and personal care routines. Lunch and snacks not only provide the children with quality nutrition, but are also used as opportunities to promote healthy eating, good manners and respectful conversation.
- 3.7 Individual development plans and target setting encourage children from the youngest age to be confident in taking the next step and instil a drive to improve and progress. Well-rehearsed routines also enable children to move through the setting confidently.
- 3.8 Next steps and phases are carefully planned, ensuring that children are happily integrated and that their learning is taken forward.

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

- 3.9 Leadership and management are outstanding. They are underpinned by the high aspirations and clear vision of the leadership, and strong support from managers and governors. Challenging priorities and targets to improve the setting are stated clearly in the development plan, which includes key performance indicators and success criteria.
- 3.10 Excellent teamwork and good use of resources, together with secure policies and procedures, ensure that children are safeguarded very well. Robust safer recruitment procedures and welfare requirements are in place. The setting's clear commitment to meeting individual needs is evident in the caring ethos and strong inclusive practice.
- 3.11 Staff continuously strive for success, demonstrated through an effective system for regular self-evaluation and continued professional development. However, formal systems for staff supervision and sharing of good practice, peer to peer coaching and mentoring are not fully developed.
- 3.12 Children's needs are quickly identified and exceptionally well met through highly effective partnerships between the setting, parents, external agencies and well-qualified EAL and SEND co-ordinators.

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

- 3.13 The overall quality and standards of the setting are outstanding. Much of its success is due to excellent leadership and a highly skilled and experienced staff team, who give high priority to ensuring that children are happy and are therefore enabled to make rapid progress within a safe and secure learning environment. All children, including those with EAL or SEND, make excellent progress relative to their varied individual starting points. At the end of the EYFS the majority of children attain outstanding results, as evidenced by the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and very effective tracking system. Children under three experiment with sounds and count to ten. Children over three use their letters and sound knowledge to spell and read, and do simple number operations and bonds to ten.
- 3.14 Staff use their secure understanding of the new EYFS framework extremely well to establish clear health and safety routines, and to create interesting learning environments that ensure all children, including those with specific needs, are challenged. Throughout the EYFS, children's progress is monitored and recorded through a consistent and efficient system of observation and assessment. Leadership and management have ensured that all the requirements for safeguarding and welfare have been met, and that children are happy and feel safe and secure.
- 3.15 The capacity of the setting to sustain current high standards, and for further improvement, is excellent. This is underpinned by a comprehensive and ambitious vision led by the senior leadership team, all aimed at improving children's life chances and learning outcomes. This has ensured that many positive improvements have taken place, including a detailed development plan, a tracking system, technology provision and an outdoor play area, and demonstrates that recommendations raised at previous inspections have been successfully implemented.