Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Milton Keynes Preparatory School

November 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Milton Keynes Preparatory School			
DfE number	826/6004			
Early Years registration number	EY284818			
Address	Tattenhoe Lane Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK3 7EG			
Telephone number	01908 642111			
Email address	info@mkps.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Simon Driver			
Proprietor	Mrs Hilary Pauley			
Age range	0 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	421			
	Boys	238	**Girls**	183
	EYFS	145	**Juniors**	276
Inspection dates	21 to 22 November 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Milton Keynes Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 0 and 11 years. It incorporates a registered nursery for children under the age of two. The school was founded in 1975 in an old house, and new purpose-built accommodation was added from 1986. It is the largest of the three schools in the area which are managed by the same proprietor and advisory board of governors. The proprietor retired from the role of headmistress in July 2016.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to create a happy environment in which children can extend their potential to the full. It aims to develop academic excellence by providing the highest educational standards within a broad curriculum, and by ensuring that all children participate in activities which they enjoy. They aim to emphasise social skills and teach children respect for other people and for themselves. Their key aim is to give children the best preparation for their senior school, so that when they leave they have the confidence to build on the academic and personal foundations the school has helped to establish.

About the pupils

1.3 Pupils come from a range of culturally diverse backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 26 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Asperger's syndrome, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 71 pupils. Of these 25 receive additional support from classroom and specialist teachers. The needs of more able children are supported by extended curricular tasks and further extra-curricular enrichment activities.

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, and showering facilities where required by the standard, 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 any 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, 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 The setting is excellent at meeting the needs of all the children who attend, including those with SEND and EAL. All children make at least good progress in their development and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. The high-quality learning provision ensures that children develop confidence, independence and an enjoyment of learning.

2.21 Staff work together as a strong team with the declared intention of ensuring that all children are happy, safe and secure. They understand their responsibilities regarding the safety and welfare of the children in their care. Safeguarding and welfare requirements have been fully met.

2.22 Strong leadership and management are successful in identifying areas for development and has mechanisms for involving all staff in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision.

2.23 Parents speak very highly of the setting and the level of care provided.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

2.24 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

2.25 A new head of the early years has undertaken a review of provision with staff and identified clear areas for development. A structured mentoring programme is now in place, which fully supports new staff in all aspects of their practice. Extension of use of the outdoor area to all the year round is another particular focus.

2.26 The setting has effective systems for staff supervision. Although meetings are not frequent, there is a culture of constant and informal supervision, which ensures the welfare of children always has high priority. Senior leaders are very accessible and create? an expectation that staff will seek advice and support if required. Appraisal is biennial with an informal review in the intervening year to ensure professional development needs are met. Staff are confident that they can request any professional training they feel would inform and enhance their practice. They take a reflective approach and communicate well with one another, regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the activities and experiences they provide for pupils. Room leaders attend staff meetings and feed back to their teams.

2.27 Parents are very happy with the provision. The excellent care, and the knowledge and understanding staff have of the children, were common themes in their feedback. They appreciated the ability of staff to give an immediate in-depth update on children's progress. The teaching and resources are excellent particularly in the outdoor area. They spoke of the friendly and approachable staff and the extremely positive feeling throughout the setting.

2.28 The setting offers a very exciting, broad and balanced curriculum, which incorporates all areas of learning and meets the statutory requirements. The enthusiastic and conscientious early years team work well together to provide stimulating activities, which meet children's needs and interests and support their learning and development. The excellent range of experiences and resources promote children's engagement and give them many opportunities for exploration and investigation. Toddlers enjoyed experimenting with a tray of soap suds using sponges and their fingers to move the bubbles around, make shapes with them and even to taste them.

2.29 The quality and effectiveness of planning is monitored weekly by the senior leadership team. The day-to-day assessment of children's learning and progress is used effectively to identify the next steps in their learning. Their individual achievements are tracked against the expected developmental goals ensuring progress and preparation for the next stage in their learning.

2.30 Equality, diversity and British values are embedded into the everyday life of the nursery. Children listen to one another. They make choices at snack time and when selecting activities, and they behave well showing a growing understanding of sharing and co-operation.

2.31 Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. All staff have up-to-date safeguarding training and all staff for whom it is required have had paediatric first aid training. Fire evacuation procedures have been carefully thought through as the registered provision is on the first floor of the building and meet the statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

2.32 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

2.33 All staff have consistently high expectations for all the children in their care. This is evident in the thoughtful and appropriately challenging interventions of adults, who have an excellent understanding of the needs of the age group. Commentary on activities and routines engages the children and encourages them to attempt to copy the language modelled by adults. At snack time a young child pointed and repeated the word apple after listening intently to the pieces of fruit being named.

2.34 All adults have secure subject knowledge and a very good understanding of the individual interests of the children. The high quality and wide range of resources provide excellent opportunities for children to explore their environment, and the daily use of the highly stimulating outdoor area plays an important part in the development of children's physical skills and independence.

2.35 A young baby showed great delight when holding hands with her key person and moving to a favourite song. She maintained good eye contact throughout and responded enthusiastically to the challenge of sitting with another child to model the actions to the song.

2.36 Useful assessment information is gathered when children join the setting. This ensures that their needs and interests are integrated into planned activities right from the start. Baseline assessments are used effectively to identify starting points and day-to-day observations are carefully reviewed to assess what children can do, and to identify the next steps in their learning. Parents are able to make their own contributions to the online record and are enthusiastic about the frequent notifications they receive about their child's learning and experiences. Senior leaders work with staff to track children's progress and identify any children who may need extra support.

2.37 Parents are able to come into the setting at any time to talk to staff. Whilst most of them are happy with the daily, detailed informal feedback they receive about their child a number of parents would find it helpful to have a dedicated time to discuss their child's overall progress and development.

2.38 All staff recognise and value equality and diversity. Every child has access to all that is on offer and the celebrations of different cultures are integrated into the curriculum.

2.39 Children are very well supported to acquire the skills they need to progress to the next stage in their learning. There is a very effective focus on the development of communication and independence. A child who was observed trying to make a dinosaur out of play dough was prompted to express exactly what she wanted to achieve. The excellent modelling of language and careful questioning by the adult supported her to show, using actions and single words what she wanted to make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

2.40 The personal development behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.

2.41 A very positive culture is evident throughout the setting. The nurturing environment created by the successful, cohesive team ensures children are happy and secure. This develops their confidence to take risks and explore their surroundings. Praise and encouragement are given for any kind of achievement big or small, which helps children to develop a have-a-go approach. Children are given many opportunities to develop their independence and initiate their own learning. Children who were eager to go out to play were excited when trying to pull on their coats and hats without waiting for the support of adults.

2.42 All children thoroughly enjoy exploring the very well-resourced outdoor area. Its design supports development across all areas of learning. They have the freedom to select activities independently and to investigate possibilities. A baby playing with a large tray of plastic balls enjoyed the way they rolled around and squealed with delight when he was able to throw them.

2.43 The layout of the Nursery setting facilitates smooth transition from one room to the next. Children are moved when they are developmentally ready to do so. At this point they have made several visits to develop relationships with the new staff and become familiar with their new surroundings. In the week before the transition date, children spend all the morning sessions in the new room. Parents are fully informed and are given information regarding the next stage and ways in which they can support the move. They are invited into the setting at a time to suit them to talk through all arrangements with new staff.

2.44 Children enjoy healthy snacks, which include fruit and milk or water. Toddlers are able to select the fruit they would like from a large tray, which is passed around – they also learn to take turns and share. Opportunities for the children to be outside to enjoy fresh air and exercise are plentiful.

2.45 Children's personal development is excellent. The provision of appropriate stimulating activities in a positive calm environment promotes their learning and development.

Outcomes for children

2.46 Outcomes for children are outstanding.

2.47 All children, including those who have SEND or EAL, make good and often excellent progress from their different starting points. Children settle quickly into the setting and develop very secure relationships with the adults in their room. High quality interventions and an excellent understanding of each child's level of development ensures that activities and experiences support their learning.

2.48 Children under 2 make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their communication skills. They show very good levels of independence and engage very positively with their learning environment. All children are enthusiastic in their enjoyment of opportunities to explore materials such as soap suds, sand, and crunchy cereal. Toddlers exploring a very large tray of frozen peas grabbed handfuls only to drop them quickly as they were cold, some children put one in their mouth, pulling a face until the cold sensation gave way to a nice soft pea, which could be eaten.

2.49 By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, nearly all children reach or exceed the level of development expected for their age.

Compliance with statutory requirements

2.50 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:

- Review the communication with parents to enable them to receive an overview of how their child is progressing in relation to the expectations for their age across all areas of learning.

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 and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Linda Smallwood	Reporting inspector
Ms Catherine Edwards	Compliance team inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathryn Henry	Co-ordinating inspector for early years